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from her brother Wm Leggett

NAVAL STORIES.

BY WILLIAM LEGGETT.

I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy billows, onwards.

Byron.

NEW-YORK:
G. & C. & H. CARVILL.
No. 108 Broadway.

1834.

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NAVAL STORIES.

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The stories contained in this little volume have all been printed before, in different works of a periodical kind, most of them in the New-York Mirror. In collecting them for publication in their present shape, the author has given them such revision as he thought might render them more worthy of the favour they have received.

THE ENCOUNTER.

THE ENCOUNTER.

> One universal shriek there rushed,
> Louder than the loud ocean, like a crash
> Of echoing thunder; and then all was hushed—
> Save the wild wind, and the remorseless dash
> Of billows.—— *Byron.*

The Active, Sloop of War, had been lying all day becalmed, in mid ocean, and was rolling and pitching in a heavy ground swell, which was the only trace left of the gale she had lately encountered. The sky was of as tender and serene a blue as if it had never been deformed with clouds; and the atmosphere was bland and pleasant, although the latitude and the season might both have led one to expect different weather. Since the morning watch, when the wind, after blowing straight an end for several days together, had died suddenly away, there had not been enough air stirring to lift the dog-vane from its staff, down which it hung in motionless repose, except when raised by the heave of the vessel, as she laboured in the trough of the sea. Her courses had been hauled up, and she lay under

her three topsails, braced on opposite tacks, ready to take advantage of the first breath of wind, from whatever quarter it might come.

The crew were disposed in various groups about the deck, some idling away in listless ease the interval of calm; some, with their clothes-bags beside them, turning it to account in overhauling their dunnage; while others moved fidgety about, on the forecastle and in the waist, eyeing, ever and anon, the horizon round, as if already weary of their short holiday on the ocean, and impatiently watching for some sign of a breeze. To a true sailor there are few circumstances more annoying than a perfect calm. The same principle of our nature which makes the traveller on land, though journeying without any definite object, desire the postilion to whip up his horses and hasten to the end of his stage, is manifested in a striking degree among seamen. The end of one voyage is but the beginning of another, and their life is a constant succession of hardships and perils; yet they cannot abide that the elements should grant them a moment's respite. As the wind dies away their spirits flag; they move heavily and sluggishly about while the calm continues; but rouse at the first whisper of the breeze, and are never gayer or more animated than when their canvass swells out to its utmost tension in the gale.

On the afternoon in question, this feeling of rest-

lessness at the continuance of the calm was not confined to the crew of the Active. Her commander had been nearly all day on deck, walking to and fro, on the starboard side, with quick impatient strides, or now stepping into one gangway, and now into the other, and casting anxious and searching looks into all quarters of the heavens, as if it were of the utmost consequence that a breeze should spring up and enable him to pursue his way. Indeed it was whispered among the officers, that there were reasons of state which made it important they should reach their point of destination as speedily as possible; though where that point was, or what those reasons were, not a soul on board knew, except the captain—and he was not a man likely to enlighten their ignorance on the subject. Few words, in truth, did any one ever hear from Black Jack, as the reefers nicknamed him; and when he did speak, what he said was not generally of a kind to make them desire he should often break his taciturnity.

He was a straight, tall, stern-looking man, just passed the prime of life, as might be inferred from the wrinkles on his thoughtful brow, and the slightly grizzled hue of the locks about his temples; though his hair, elsewhere, was as black as the raven. His face bore the marks both of storm and battle: it was furrowed and deeply embrowned by long exposure to every vicissitude of weather; and a deep scar across the left brow told a tale of dangers braved

and overcome. His eyes were large, black and piercing; and the habitual compression and curve of his lip indicated both firmness and haughtiness of character—indications which those who sailed with him had no reason to complain of as deceptive.

But notwithstanding his impatience, and the urgency of his mission, whatever it was, the Active continued to roll heavily about at the sport of the big round billows, which swelled up and spread and tumbled over so lazily, that their glassy surfaces were not broken by a ripple. The sun went down clear, but red and fiery; and the sky, though its blue faded to a duskier tint, still remained unflecked by a single cloud. As the broad round disk disappeared beneath the wave, all hands were called to stand by their hammocks; and when the stir and bustle incident to that piece of duty had subsided, an unwonted degree of stillness settled on the vessel. This was owing in part, no doubt, to the presence of the commander, before whom the crew were not apt to indulge in any great exuberance of merriment; but the sluggish and unusual state of the weather had probably the largest share in the effect. The captain continued on deck, pacing up and down the starboard side; the lieutenant of the watch leaned over the taffrel, his trumpet idly dangling by its becket from his arm; and the two quarter-deck midshipmen walked in the gangway, beguiling their

watch with prattle about home, or gay anticipations of the future.

"We shall have a dull and lazy night of it, Vangs," said the master's mate of the forecastle, as he returned forward from adding on the log-slate another "ditto" to the long column of them which recorded the history of the day. The person he addressed stood on the heel of the bowsprit, with his arms folded on his breast, and his gaze fixed intently on the western horizon, from which the daylight had now so completely faded, that it required a practised and keen eye to discern where the sky and water met. He was a tall, square-framed, aged looking seaman, whose thick gray hair shaded a strongly marked and weather-beaten face, and whose shaggy overcoat, buttoned to the throat, covered a form that for forty years had breasted the storms and perils of every sea. He did not turn his head, nor withdraw his eyes from the spot they rested on, as he said, in a low tone, "We shall have work enough before morning, Mr. Garnet."

"Why, where do you read that, Vangs?" inquired the midshipman—"there is nothing of the sort in my reckoning."

"I read it in a book I have studied through many a long cruise, Mr. Garnet, and though my eyes are getting old, I think I can understand its meaning yet. Hark ye, young man, the hammocks are piped down,

and the watch is set; but there will be no watch in this night—mark my words."

"Why, Vangs, you are turning prophet," replied the master's-mate, who was a rattling young fellow, full of blood and blue veins. "I shouldn't wonder to see you strike tarpauling when the cruise is up, rig out in a Methodist's broad brim and straight togs, and ship the next trip for parson."

"My cruisings are pretty much over, Mr. Garnet, and my next trip, I am thinking, is one I shall have to go alone—though there's a sign in the heavens this night makes me fear I shall have but too much company."

"Why, what signs do you talk of, man?" asked the young officer, somewhat startled by the quiet and impressive tone and manner of the old quartermaster. "I see nothing that looks like a change of weather, and yet I see all there is to be seen."

"I talked in the same way, once, I remember," said Vangs, "when I was about your age, as we lay becalmed one night in the old Charlotte East Indiaman, heaving and pitching in the roll of a ground swell, much as we do now. The next morning found me clinging to a broken topmast, the only thing left of a fine ship of seven hundred tons, which, with every soul on board of her, except me, had gone to the bottom. That was before you were born, Mr. Garnet."

"Such things have often been, no doubt," said Garnet, "and such things will be again—nay, may happen as you say, before morning. But because you were once wrecked in a gale of wind that sprung up out of a calm, it is no reason that every calm is to be followed by such a gale. Show me a sign of wind, and I may believe it; but for my part, I see no likelihood of enough even to blow away the smoke of that cursed galley, which circles and dances about here on the forecastle, as if it was master's mate of the watch, and was ordered to keep a bright look-out."

"Turn your eye in that direction, Mr. Garnet. Do you not see a faint belt of light, no broader than my finger, that streaks the sky where the sun went down? It is not daylight, for I watched that all fade away, and the last glimmer of it was gone before that dim brassy streak began to show itself. And carry your eye in a straight line above it—do you not mark how thick and lead-like the air looks? There is that there," said the old man, (laying his hand on the bowsprit, as he prepared to sit down between the night-heads) "will try what stuff these sticks are made of before the morning breaks."

Young Garnet put his hand over his brow, and half shutting his eyes, peered intently in the direction the old seaman indicated; but no sign pregnant with such evil as he foreboded, or no appearance even of the wished for breeze, met his vision. Im-

puting the predictions of Vangs to those megrims which old sailors are apt to have in a long calm, or perhaps to a desire to play upon his credulity, he folded his pea-coat more closely about him, and taking his seat on the nettings in such a position that he could lean back against the fore-rigging, prepared to settle himself down in that delicious state of repose between sleeping and waking, in which he thought he might with impunity doze away such a quiet watch as his promised to be. He had scarcely closed his eyes, however, when a sound rung in his ears that made him spring to the deck, and at once dispelled all disposition to slumber. It was the clear trumpet-like voice of the captain himself, hailing the forecastle.

"Sir!" bawled the startled master's mate.

"Have your halliards clear for running, sir!—your cluelines led along, and the men all at their stations."

"Ay, ay, sir!" sung Garnet in reply, and then muttered to himself, "here's the devil to pay and no pitch hot. What is the meaning of all this, I wonder? Has the skipper seen old Vangs's streak of brass, too? or does he hope to coax the wind out, by raising such a breeze on deck?" And he stepped upon a shot box, and cast another long, searching glance into the western horizon; but there was no sign there which to his inexperienced eye boded any change of weather.

"Fo'castle, there!" again sounded from the quarter-deck, but it was now the voice of the lieutenant of the watch, hailing through his trumpet.

"Sir!" answered the mate.

"Send the fo'castle-men aloft to furl the foresail. Quarter-gunner and after-guard, do you hear! lay aloft—lay out—furl away!"

These and other similar orders were quickly obeyed, and stillness again succeeded. But the attention of all on deck was now aroused; and every one watched in silence for some less questionable forerunner of wind than was yet visible to their eyes. They all noticed, however, that the sky had grown thicker and of a dingier hue, and that not a single star peeped through the gloom. But there was not a breath of air yet stirring. The topsails continued to flap heavily against the masts, as they were swayed to and fro by the motion of the vessel; the lower yards creaked in their slings; and the ship headed now one way and now another, as she yawed and swung round, completely at the mercy of the swell. The seamen gathered in groups at their several stations, and waited in silence the result which all now began to apprehend.

But while these feelings of indefinite fear were entertained by those on deck, the watch below were disturbed by no such anxiety. The officers in the gun-room were variously occupied, according to their different tastes and inclinations; some amusing

themselves by reading, some writing, and others stretched upon the chairs or in their berths, dreaming away the interval of rest. The midshipmen in the steerage had gathered round their mess-table, and were engaged in lively chat and repartee, and in cracking nautical jokes and witticisms upon each other. Their discourse was plentifully interlarded with sea-phrases; for these juvenile sons of Neptune, however slender their seamanship in other respects, have commonly great volubility in rattling off the technicals of their profession, and a surprising facility in applying them to the ordinary topics of conversation. With the omission of a single letter, the distich describing Hudibras might be applied to them, or, if a poor pun be allowable, it may be said to fit them to a *t*, for

> ———— they cannot ope
> Their mouths, but out there falls a rope.

One of the merriest and noisiest of the group in the Active's steerage was a little, rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed reefer, whose flaxen hair curled in natural ringlets around his temples, and was surmounted by a small low-crowned tarpauling hat, cocked knowingly on one side, in amusing imitation of the style of the full-grown jack tar.

"Hullo, Jigger, how does she head now?" cried the little wag to one of the messboys, as his bandy legs made their appearance down the companion ladder.

"She head ebery which way, Misser Burton," answered the black, his shining face dilated with a prodigious grin, showing he relished the humour of the question. "It is a dead calm on deck you know, Misser Burton, and de main yard is brace frat aback."

"O, I see," rejoined the urchin, "they have hove her to, Jigger, to give her half a lemon to keep her from fainting. She has outsailed the wind, and is lying by to wait for it."

"Lying by, indeed!" said another; "she is going like a top."

"And if she keeps on," added a third, "she will soon go as fast as the Dutchman's schooner, when she stood into port under a heavy press of bolt-ropes, the sails having blown clean out of them at sea."

"Oh, I heard of that schooner," resumed little Burton, the first speaker. "It was she that sailed so fast, that when they broke up her hatches, they found she had sailed her bottom off."

"Her skipper," interrupted another, "was both master and chief mate, and they made the duty easy by dividing it between them, watch and watch."

"Yet the Dutchman grew so thin upon it," added little Burton, "that when he got home his mother and sister could'nt both look at him at once."

"And his dog," said the other, "got so weak, it had to lean against the mast to bark."

"Come, come, take a turn there, and belay,"

cried one of the older midshipmen, who was stretched at full length upon a locker. "Come, you have chased that joke far enough. Heave about, and see if you can't give us something better on t'other tack."

"Well, Tom Derrick, if you don't like our rigs, tip us a twist, yourself. Come, spin us a yarn, my boy, if you have your jaw-tacks aboard."

"No, no, Charley Burton, I can't pay out any slack to-night. I am as sleepy as a lookout in a calm. My eyes feel like the marine's when his cue was served so taught, he could'nt make his eyelids meet. Hullo, Jigger, rouse out my hammock from that heap and hang it up—you know which it is, don't you?"

"Ki! I wish I had as much tobacco as I know which Misser Derrick's hammock is!" eagerly replied the negro.

This characteristic speech produced a hearty burst of laughter; and in chat and merriment of this sort the evening slipped away, until the hour for extinguishing the lights arrived, and the quarter-master came down to douse the glim.

"Well, Vangs," cried the ever ready Burton, "it is blowing an Irishman's hurricane on deck, is'nt it—straight up and down, like a pig's eye?"

"It is all quiet yet," replied Vangs, "but the sky has a queer look, and there will be a hurricane of a

different sort before you are many hours older, Mr. Charles."

"Is there really any prospect of wind?" asked the midshipman we have called Derrick.

"There is something brewing in the clouds we none of us understand," answered the old man, in his low quiet tone. We shall have more wind than we want before long, or I am out in my reckoning."

"Let it come but-end foremost, if it chooses, and the sooner the better," said young Burton, laughing; "any weather rather than this; for this is neither fish, flesh, nor red herring. Let it blow, Vangs, and I would'nt mind if it were such a breeze as you had in the old Charlotte, you know, when it blew the sheet-anchor into the foretop, and took three men to hold the captain's hair on his head."

The old quarter-master turned a grave and thoughtful look on the round face of the lively boy, and seemed meditating an answer that might repress what probably struck him as untimely mirth; but even while he was in the act to speak, the tempest he had predicted burst in sudden fury upon the vessel. The first indication those below had of its approach was the wild rushing sound of the gust, which broke upon their ears like the roar of a volcano. The heaving and rolling of the ship ceased all at once, as if the waves had been subdued and chained down by the force of a mighty pressure. The vessel stood motionless an instant, as if instinct

with life, and cowering in conscious fear of the approaching strife; the tempest then burst upon her but-end foremost, as Burton expressed it, and the stately mass reeled and fell over before it, like a tower struck down by a thunderbolt. The surge was so violent that the ship was thrown almost on her beam-ends, and every thing on board, not secured in the strongest manner, was pitched with great force to leeward. Midshipmen, mess-table, hammocks, and the contents of the mess lockers, fell rustling, rattling, and mixed in strange disorder, to the lee-scuppers; and when the ship slowly righted, straining and trembling in every plank, it was a moment or two before those who had been so unexpectedly heaped together in the bends, could extricate themselves from the confusion, and make their way to the upper deck.

There, a scene of fearful grandeur was presented. The sky was of a murky, leaden hue, and appeared to bend over the ship in a nearer and narrower arch, binding the ocean in so small a round, that the eye could trace, through the whole circle, the line where the sickly looking heaven rested on the sea. The air was thick and heavy; and the water, covered with driving snow-like foam, seemed to be packed and flattened down by the fury of the blast, which scattered its billows into spray as cutting as the sleet of a December storm. The wind howled and screamed through the rigging with an appalling

sound, that might be likened to the shrieks and wailings of angry fiends; and the ship fled before the tempest, like an affrighted thing, with a velocity that piled the water in a huge bank around her bows, and sent it off, whirling and sparkling, in lines of dazzling whiteness, soon lost in the general hue of the ocean, which resembled a wild waste of drifting snow.

There was one on deck, however, who had foreseen this awful change, and made preparations to meet it; and when the tempest burst, in full, fell swoop, upon his ship, it found nothing but the bare hull and spars to oppose its tremendous power. Every sail had been closely and securely furled, except the forestorm staysail, which was set for a reason that seamen will understand; but being hauled well aft by both sheets, it was stretched stiffly amidships, and presented nothing but the bolt rope for the wind to act upon. The masts and yards, with their snug and well-bound rolls of canvass, alone encountered the hurricane. But even these were tried to the uttermost. The topmasts bent and creaked before the blast, and the royal poles of the topgallantmasts, which extended above the crosstrees, whipped and thrashed about like pliant rods. The running rigging rattled against the spars, and the shrouds and backstays strained and cracked, as if striving to draw the strong bolts which secured them to the vessel.

For more than an hour did the Active flee along in this way, like a wild horse foaming and stretching at his utmost speed, driven onward in the van of the tempest, and exposed to its fiercest wrath. At length, the first fury of the gale passed away, and the wind, though still raging tempestuously, swept over her with less appalling force. The ocean, now, as if to revenge itself for its constrained inactivity, roused from its brief repose, and swelled into billows that rolled and chased each other with the wild glee of ransomed demons. Wave upon wave, in multitudinous confusion, came roaring in from astern; and their white crests, leaping, and sparkling, and hissing, formed a striking feature in the scene. The wind, fortunately, issued from the right point, and drove the Active towards her place of destination. The dun pall of clouds, which from the commencement of the gale, had totally overspread the heavens, except in the quarter whence the blast proceeded, now began to give way, and a reddish light shone out here and there, in long horizontal streaks, like the glow of expiring coals between the bars of a furnace. Though the first dreadful violence of the storm was somewhat abated, it still raved with too much fierceness and power to admit of any relaxation of vigilance. The commander himself still retained the trumpet, and every officer stood in silence at his station, clinging to whatever might assist him to maintain his difficult footing.

"Light, oh!" cried the lookout on one of the cat-heads.

"Where away?" demanded the captain.

"Dead ahead."

"What does it look like, and how far off?" shouted the captain, in a loud and earnest voice.

"Can see nothing now, sir; the glim is doused."

"Here, Mr. Burton," cried the commander, "take this night glass; jump aloft on the foreyard, sir, and see if you can make out any object ahead. Hurry up, hurry up, and let me hear from you immediately, sir! Lay aft to the braces! Forecastle, there! have hands by your staysail sheets on both sides! foreyard, there!"——

But before the captain had finished his hail, the voice of little Burton was heard, singing out, "sail oh!"

"What does she look like, and where away?"

"A large vessel lying to under bare poles—starboard your helm, sir, quick—hard a starboard, or you will fall aboard of her!"

This startling intelligence was hardly communicated before the vessel descried from aloft loomed suddenly into sight from deck through the thick weather to leeward. Her dusk and shadowy form seemed to rise up from the ocean, so suddenly did it open to view, as the driving mist was scattered for a moment. She lay right athwart the Active's bows, and almost under her fore-foot—as it seemed

while she pitched into the trough of an enormous sea—and the Active rode on the ridge of the succeeding wave, which curled above the chasm, as if to overwhelm the vessel beneath.

"Starboard your helm, quarter-master! hard a-starboard!" cried the commander of the Active, in a tone of startling energy.

"Starboard!" repeated the deep solemn voice of old Vangs, who stood on the quarter-nettings, his tall figure propped against the mizen rigging, and his arm wreathed round the shroud.

"Jump to the braces, men!" continued the captain strenuously—"haul in your starboard braces, haul! —ease off your larboard! does she come to, quarter-master?—Fo'castle there! ease off your larboard staysail sheet—let all go, sir!"

These orders were promptly obeyed, but it was too late for them to avail. The wheel, in the hands of four stout and experienced seamen, was forced swiftly round, and the effect of the rudder was assisted by a pull of the starboard braces; but in such a gale, and under bare poles, the helm exerted but little power over the driving and ponderous mass. She had headed off hardly a point from her course, when she was taken up by a prodigious surge, and borne onward with fearful velocity. The catastrophe was now inevitable. In an instant the two ships fell together, their massive timbers crashing with the fatal force of the concussion. A wild

shriek ascended from the deck of the stranger, and woman's shrill voice mingled with the sound. All was now confusion and uproar on board both vessels. The Active had struck the stranger broad on the bows, while the bowsprit of the latter, rushing in between the foremast and the starboard fore-rigging of the Active, had snapped her shrouds and stays, and torn up the bolts and chainplates, as if they had been thread and wire. Staggering back from the shock, she was carried to some distance by a refluent wave, which suddenly subsiding, she gave such a heavy lurch to port that the foremast—now wholly unsupported on the starboard side—snapped short off like a withered twig, and fell with a loud plash into the ocean.

"The foremast is gone by the board!" shouted the officer of the forecastle.

"My God!" exclaimed the captain, "and Charles Burton has gone with it! Fo'castle there! Did Charles Burton come down from the foreyard?"

"Burton! Burton! Burton!" called twenty voices, and "Burton!" was shouted loudly over the side; but there was no reply!

In the mean while another furious billow lifted the vessel on its crest, and the two ships closed again, like gladiators, faint and stunned, but still compelled to do battle. The bows of the stranger this time drove heavily against the bends of the Active just abaft her main-rigging, and her bowsprit darted

quivering in over the bulwarks, as if it were the arrowy tongue of some huge sea monster. At this instant a wild sound of agony, between a shriek and groan, was heard in that direction, and those who turned to ascertain its cause saw, as the vessels again separated, a human body, swinging and writhing at the stranger's bowsprit head. The vessel heaved up into the moonlight, and showed the face of poor Vangs, the quarter-master, his back apparently crushed and broken, but his arms clasped round the spar, to which he appeared to cling with convulsive tenacity. The bowsprit had caught him on its end as it ran in over the Active's side, and driving against the mizzenmast, deprived the poor wretch of all power to rescue himself from the dreadful situation. While a hundred eyes were fastened in a gaze of horror on the impaled seaman, thus dangling over the boiling ocean, the strange ship again reeled forward, as if to renew the terrible encounter. But her motion was now slow and labouring. She was evidently settling by the head; she paused in mid career, gave a heavy drunken lurch to starboard, till her topmasts whipped against the rigging of her antagonist, then rising slowly on the ridge of the next wave, she plunged head foremost, and disappeared for ever. One shriek of horror and despair rose through the storm—one wild delirious shriek! The waters swept over the drowning wretches, and hushed their gurgling cry. Then all

was still!—all but the rush and whirl of waves as they were sucked into the vortex, and the voice of the storm, which howled its wild dirge above the spot.

When day dawned on the ocean, the Active presented a different appearance from that which she exhibited but a few short hours before. Her foremast gone, her bowsprit sprung, her topgallantmasts struck, her bulwarks shattered, her rigging hanging loose, and whitened by the wash of the spray—she looked little like the gay and gallant thing which, at the same hour of the previous day, had ploughed her course through the sea, despite the adverse gale, and moved proudly along under a cloud of canvass, as if she defied the fury of the elements. Now, how changed! how sad the contrast! The appearance of such of the officers and crew as were moving about the deck harmonized with that of the vessel. They looked pale and dejected; and the catastrophe they had witnessed had left traces of horror stamped on every brow. The Active was still near the spot of the fatal event, having been lying to under a close reefed mainsail, which the lulling of the wind had enabled her to bear. As the dawn advanced, the upper deck became crowded, and long and searching looks were cast over the ocean in every direction, in the hope to discover some vestige of those who had met their doom during the night. Such of the boats as had not been staved

were lowered, and long and patient efforts were made to discover traces of the wreck. But the search was fruitless, and was at last reluctantly abandoned. The boats were again hauled up and stowed; the Active filled away, and under such sail as she could carry in her crippled state, crept forward towards her goal. During the rest of her voyage no merry laugh, no lively prattle, cheered the steerage mess-table. The bright eyes of Charles Burton were closed—his silvery voice was hushed—his gay heart was cold—and his messmates mourned his timeless fate with real sorrow.

In a few days, the Sloop of War reached her port, and was immediately warped to the dock-yard, where she was stripped, hove down, and thoroughly overhauled. The officers and crew lent themselves earnestly to the duty, and a short time served to accomplish it. In less than a week, every thing set up and all a-taunto, the ship hauled out again, gleaming with fresh paint, and looking as proud and stately as before the disaster. But where was she that had been wrecked in the encounter? Where and who were those that perished with her? Fond hearts were doubtless eagerly awaiting them, and anxious eyes strained over the ocean "to hail the bark that never could return." No word, no whisper ever told their fate. They who saw them perish knew not the victims, and the deep gave not up its dead.

A NIGHT AT GIBRALTAR.

A NIGHT AT GIBRALTAR.

The mists boil up around me, and the clouds
Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury,
Like foam from the roused ocean of deep hell.
* * * * * * * *
I am most sick at heart—nay, grasp me not—
I am all feebleness—the mountains whirl
Spinning around me—I grow blind—What art thou?

Byron.

THE first time I ever saw the famous Rock of Gibraltar was on a glorious afternoon in the month of October. The sun diffused just heat enough through the air to give it an agreeable temperature, and its soft and somewhat hazy light, showed the scenery of the Straits to the best advantage. We had had a rough, but uncommonly short passage; for the wind, though tempestuous, had blown from the right quarter; and our gallant frigate dashed and bounded over the waves before it, "like a steed that knows his rider." I could then add with the poet, from whom I have borrowed this quotation, "Welcome to their roar!" for I was a novice on the ocean in those days, and had not entirely re-

covered from certain uneasy sensations about the region of the epigastrium, which by no means rendered the noise of rushing waters the most agreeable sound to my ears, or the rolling of the vessel the most pleasant motion for my body. Never did old sea-dog of a sailor, in the horse latitudes, pray more sincerely for a wind, than I did for a calm, during that boisterous passage; and never, I may add, did the selfish prayer of a sinner prove less availing. The gale kept "due on to the Propontic and the Hellespont," and it blew so hard that it sometimes seemed to lift our old craft almost out of water. When we came out of port, we had had our dashy fair-weather spars aloft, with skysail-yards athwart, a moonsail to the main, and hoist enough for the broad-blue to show itself above that. But before the pilot left us, our topgallant-poles were under the boom-cover, and storm-stumps in their places; and the first watch was scarcely relieved, when the boatswain's call—repeated by four mates, whose lungs seemed formed on purpose to outroar a tempest—rang through the ship, "All hands to house topgallantmasts, ahoy!" From that time till we made the land, the gale continued with unintermitted violence, to the great delight of the old tars, and the manifest annoyance of the green reefers, of whom we had rather an unusual number on board. If my pen were endued with the slightest portion of the quality which distinguished Hogarth's pencil, I might

here give a description of a man-of-war's steerage in a storm, which should force a smile from the most saturnine reader. I must own I did not much relish the humour of the scene then—*pars magna fui* —that is, I was sea-sick myself; but often since, sometimes in my hammock, sometimes during a cold mid-watch on deck, I have burst into a hearty laugh, as the memory of our grotesque distresses, and of the odd figures we cut during that passage, has glanced across my mind.

But the longest day must have an end, and the stiffest breeze cannot last for ever. The wind, which for a fortnight had been blowing as hard as a trumpeter for a wager, blew itself out at last. About dawn one morning it began to lull, and by the time the sun was fairly out of the water, it fell flat calm. It was my morning watch, and what with sea-sickness, hard duty, and having been cabined, cribbed, confined for so long a time in my narrow and unaccustomed lodgings, I felt worn out, and in no mood to exult in the choice I had made of a profession. I stood holding by one of the belaying pins of the main fife-rail, for I had not yet, as the sailors phrase it, got my sea-legs aboard, and I looked, I suppose, as melancholy as a sick monkey on a lee backstay, when a cry from the foretopsail-yard reached my ear, that instantly thrilled to my heart, and set the blood running in a lively current through my veins. "Land, oh!" cried the jack-tar on the lookout, in a cable-

tier voice, which seemed to issue from the bottom of his stomach. I have heard many delightful sounds in my time, but few which seemed pleasanter than the rough voice of that vigilant sailor. I do verily believe, that not seven bells (grog time of day) to a thirsty tar, the dinner bell to a hungry alderman, or the passing bell of some rich old curmudgeon to a prodigal heir, ever gave greater rapture. The how-d'ye-do of a friend, the good-by of a country cousin, the song of *the* Signorina, and Paganini's fiddle, may all have music in them; but the cry of land to a sea-sick midshipman is sweeter than them all.

We made what, in nautical language, is termed a good land-fall—so good, indeed, that it was well for us the night and the wind both ceased when they did; for, had they lasted another hour, we should have found ourselves *landed*, and in a way that even I, much as I wished to set my foot once more on terra firma, should not have relished very much. On its becoming light enough to ascertain our whereabout, it was discovered that we were within the very jaws of the Straits, completely land-locked by the "steepy shore," where

"Europe and Afric on each other gaze;"

and already beginning to feel the influence of the strong and ceaseless easterly current which rushes into the Mediterranean through that passage at the rate of four or five knots an hour. A gentle land-

breeze sprung up in the course of the morning watch, which, though not exactly fair, yet coming from the land of the "dusky Moor," had enough of southing in it to enable us, with the set of the current, to get along tolerably well, beating with a long and a short leg through the Straits.

But there is no reason that I should make my story of the passage as tedious as the reality; so, here's for a fair breeze and square away! And now, let the reader fancy himself riding at anchor in the beautiful but unsafe bay of Gibraltar, directly opposite and almost within the very shadow of the grand and gigantic fortress, which nature and art have vied with each other in rendering impregnable. No one who has looked on that vast and forted rock, with its huge granite outline shown in bold relief against the clear sky of the south of Europe—its towering and ruin-crowned peaks—its enormous crags, caverns, and precipices—and its rich historical associations, shedding a powerful though vague interest over every feature—can easily forget the impression which that imposing and magnificent spectacle creates. The flinty mass rising abruptly to an elevation of fifteen hundred feet, and surrounded on every side by the waters of the Mediterranean, save a narrow slip of level sand which stretches from its northern end and connects it with the main land, has, added to its other claims to admiration, the strong interest of utter insolation.

For a while, the spectator gazes on the "stupendous whole" with an expression of pleased wonder at its height, extent, and strength, and without becoming conscious of the various opposite features which make up its grand effect of sublimity and beauty. He sees only the giant rock spreading its vast dark mass against the sky, its broken and wavy ridge, its beetling projections, its "steep down gulfs," and dizzy precipices of a thousand feet perpendicular descent. After a time, his eye becoming in some degree familiarized with the main and sterner features of the scene, he perceives that the granite mountain is variegated by here and there some picturesque work of art, or spot of green beauty, smiling with surpassing loveliness in contrast with the savage roughness around it. Dotted about at long intervals over the steep sides of the craggy mass, are seen the humble cottages of the soldiers' wives, or, perched on the very edges of the cliffs, the guard-houses of the garrison; before which, ever and anon, may be descried the vigilant sentry, dwindled to a pigmy, walking to and fro on his allotted and dangerous post. Now and then, the eye detects a more sumptuous edifice, half hid in a grove of acacias, orange, and almond trees, clustering around it, as if to shut from the view of its inhabitant, in his eyrie-like abode, the scene of desolate grandeur above, beneath him, and on every side. At the foot of the rock, on a small and narrow slip, less precipitous than the rest, stands the

town of Gibraltar, which, as seen from the bay, with its dark-coloured houses, built in the Spanish style, and rising one above another in ampitheatrical order; the ruins of the Moorish castle and defences in the rear; and the high massive walls which enclose it at the water's edge, and which, thick-planted with cannon, seem formed to "laugh a seige to scorn," has a highly picturesque effect. The military works of Gibraltar are on a scale of magnificence commensurate with the natural grandeur of the scene. Its walls, its batteries, and its moles, which, bristling with cannon, stretch far out into the bay, and against whose solid structures the waves spend their fury in vain, are works of art planned with great genius, and executed with consummate skill. An indefinite sensation of awe mixes with the stranger's feelings, as gazing upon the defences which every where meet his eye, he remembers, that the strength of Gibraltar consists not in its visible works alone, but that, hewn in the centre of the vast and perpendicular rock, there are long galleries and ample chambers, where the engines of war are kept always ready, and whence, at any moment, the fires of death may be poured down upon an assailant.

Though the rock is the chief feature of interest in the bay of Gibraltar, yet, when fatigued by long gazing on its barren and solitary grandeur, there are not wanting other objects on which the eye of the stranger may repose with pleasure. The green

shores of Andalusia, encircling the bay in their semi-circular sweep, besides the attraction which verdant hills and valleys always possess, have the superadded charm of being linked with many classical and romantic associations. The picturesque towns of St. Roque and Algesiras, the one crowning a smooth eminence at some distance from the shore, and the other occupying a gentle declivity that sinks gradually down to the sparkling waters of the bay —the mountains of Spain, fringed with cork forests, in the back ground—the dimly seen coast of Morocco across the Straits, with the white walls of Ceuta just discernible on one of its promontories—the towering form of Abila, which not even the unromantic modern name of Apes-hill can devest of all its interest as one of "the trophies of great Hercules"—these are all attractive features in the natural landscape, and, combined, render it a scene of exceeding beauty.

The clear blue waters of the bay itself commonly present an appearance of great variety and animation. Here may at all times be seen, moored closely together, a numerous fleet of vessels, from every quarter of the globe, of every fashion of structure, and manned by beings of every creed, land, and colour. The flags and pennons which float from their masts, the sounds which rise from their decks, and the appearance and employments of the moving throngs upon them, all tend to heighten the charm

of novelty and variety. In one place, may be seen, perhaps, a shattered and dismantled hulk, on board of which some exiled Spanish patriot, with his family, has taken refuge, dwelling there full in the sight of his native land, which yet he can scarcely hope ever to tread again: in another—on the high latticed stern of a tall, dark-looking craft, whose raking masts, black bends, and trig, warlike appearance excite a doubt whether she be merchantman or pirate—a group of Turks, in their national and beautiful costume, smoking their long chiboques with an air of as much gravity as if they were engaged in a matter on which their lives, or the lives of their whole race, depended. Beside them lies a heavy, clumsy dogger, on board of which a company of industrious, slow-moving Dutchmen are engaged in trafficking away their cargo of cheese, butter, Bologna sausages, and real Schiedam; and not far away from these, a crew of light-hearted Genoese sailors are stretched at length along the deck of their polacca, chanting, in voices made musical by distance, one of the rich melodies with which their language abounds. Boats are continually passing hither and thither between the vessels and the shore; and every now and then, a long and slender felucca, with its slanting yards, and graceful lateen sails, glides across the bay, laden with the products of the fruitful soil of Andalusia, which are destined to sup-

ply the tables of the pent-up inhabitants of the garrison.

I have mentioned that it was on a fine day in October that we arrived at Gibraltar, and I have accordingly sketched the Rock, and the adjacent scenery, as they appeared to me through the mellow light of that pleasant afternoon. To one viewing the scene from a different point from that which I occupied, our own gallant frigate would have presented no unattractive object in the picture. While we were beating through the Straits, the gunner's crew had been employed in blacking the bends, somewhat rusty from the constant wash of a stormy sea; and we had embraced the opportunity of the gentle land breeze to replace our taunt fair-weather poles, and to bend and send aloft topgallant-sails, royals, and skysails, for which there had not before been any recent occasion. Thus renewed, and all a-taunto, with our glossy sides glistening in the sun, our flags flying, and the broad blue streaming at the main, there was no object in all that gay and animated bay on which the eye could rest with greater pleasure. The bustle consequent upon coming to anchor was, among our active and disciplined crew, of but brief duration. In a very few minutes, every yard was squared with the nicest precision; every rope hauled taught, and laid down in a handsome Flemish coil upon the deck; and the

vast symmetrical bulk, with nothing to indicate its recent buffetings with the storm, lay floating quietly on the bright surface,

"As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean."

I had been on duty ever since the previous midnight, but I felt no disposition to go below. For more than an hour after the boatswain piped down, I remained on deck, gazing, with unsated eyes, on the various and attractive novelties around me. A part of the fascination of the scene was doubtless owing to that feeling of young romance, which invests every object with the colours of the imagination; and a part, to its contrast with the dull and monotonous prospect to which I had lately been confined, till my heart fluttered, like a caged bird, to be once more among the green trees and rustling grass—to see fields covered with golden grain, and swelling away in their fine undulations—to scent the pleasant odour of the meadows, and range at will through those leafy forests, which, I began to think, were ill exchanged for the narrow and heaving deck of a forty-four. Thoughts of this kind mingled with my musings, as I leaned over the tafferel, with my eyes bent on the verdant hills and slopes of Spain; and so absorbed was I in contemplation, that I heard not my name pronounced, till it was repeated two or three times, by the officer of the deck.

"Mr. Transom!" cried he, in a quick and im-

patient voice, "are you deaf or asleep, sir? Here, jump into the first cutter alongside! Would you keep the commodore waiting all day?"

I felt my cheek redden at this speech of the lieutenant—one of those popinjays who, dressed in a little brief authority, think to show their own consequence by playing off impertinent airs upon those of inferior station. I had seen enough of naval service, however, to know that no good comes of replying to the insolence of a superior; so, suppressing the answer that rose to my lips, I hastened down the side into the boat, in the stern-sheets of which my commander was already seated.

"Shove off, sir," said he.

"Let fall! give way!" cried I to the men, who sprang to their oars with alacrity, making the boat skim through the water lightly and fleetly as a swallow through the air. In five minutes we were floating alongside the stone quay at the Water-Port—as the principal and strongly fortified entrance to the garrison from the bay is called.

"You will wait here for me," said the commodore, as he stepped out of the boat. "Should I not return before the gate is closed, pull round to the Ragged-Staff," (the name of the other landing-place,) "and wait there."

"Ay, ay, sir." But though I answered promptly, and with a tone of alacrity, I was not, in truth, very well pleased at the prospect of a long and

tedious piece of service, fatigued as I already was with my vigil of the previous night, and the active duties of the day. Little cared the old commodore, however, whether I was pleased or offended. Without honouring me with a look, he turned away as he gave the order, and stepping quickly over the drawbridge which connects the quay with the fortress, disappeared under the massive archway of the gate.

For a while, the scene at the Water-Port afforded abundant amusement. The quay, beside which our boat was lying, is a small octangular wharf, constructed of huge blocks of granite, strongly cemented together. It is the only place which boats, except those belonging to the garrison, or national vessels in the harbour, are permitted to approach; and though but a few yards square in extent, is enfiladed in several directions by frowning batteries of granite, mounted with guns, of which a single discharge would shiver the whole structure to atoms. Merchant vessels lying in the bay are unloaded by means of lighters, which, with the boats of passage continually plying between the shipping and the shore, and the market-boats from the adjacent coast of Spain, all crowd round this narrow quay, rendering it a place of singular business and bustle. As the sunset hour approaches, the activity and confusion increases. Crowds of people, of all nations, and every variety of costume and language, jostle

each other as they hurry through the gate. The stately Greek, in his embroidered jacket, rich purple cap, and flowing capote, strides carelessly along. The Jew, with bent head, shaven crown, and coarse, though not unpicturesque gaberdine, glides with a noiseless step through the crowd, turning from side to side quick wary glances from underneath his downcast brows. The Moor, wrapped close in his white bernoose, stalks sullenly apart, as if he alone had no business in the stirring scene; while the noisy Spaniard at his side wages an obstreperous argument, or shouts in loud guttural sounds for his boat. French, English, and Americans, officers, merchants, and sailors, are all intermingled in the motley mass, each engaged in his own business, and each adding his part to the Babel-like clamour of tongues. High on the walls, the sentinels, with their arms glistening in the sun, walk to and fro on their posts, and look down with indifference or abstraction on the scene of hurry and turmoil beneath them.

Among the various striking figures that attracted my attention, as I reclined in the stern-sheets of the cutter, gazing on the shifting throng before me, there was one the appearance and manners of whom awakened peculiar interest. He was a tall, muscular, dark-looking Spaniard, whose large frame and strong and well proportioned limbs were set off to good advantage by the national dress of the pea-

santry of his country. His sombrero, slouched in a studied manner over his eyes, as if to conceal their fierce rolling balls, shaded a face, the sun-burnt hue of which showed that it had not always been so carefully protected. From the crimson sash which was bound round his waist, concealing the connexion of his embroidered velvet jacket with his nether garments, a long knife depended; and this, together with a sinister expression of countenance, and an indescribable something in the general air and bearing of the man, created an impression which caused me to shrink involuntary from him whenever he approached the boat. He himself seemed actuated by similar feelings. On first meeting my eye, he drew his sombrero deeper over his brow, and hastily retired to another part of the quay; but every now and then I could see his dark face above a group of the intervening throng, and his keen black eyes seemed always directed towards me, till, perceiving that I noticed him, he would turn away, and mix again among the remoter portion of the crowd.

I endeavoured to follow this singular figure in one of his windings through the multitude, when my attention was drawn in another direction by a loud, long call from a bugle, sounded within the walls, and, in an instant after, repeated with a clearer and louder blast from their summit. This signal gave new motion and activity to the crowd. A few hurried from the quay into the garrison, but a greater

number poured from the interior, and hastily crossed the drawbridge to the quay, and all appeared anxious to depart. Boat after boat was drawn up, received its burden, and darted off, while others took their places, and were in turn soon filled by the retiring crowd. Soldiers from the garrison came out upon the quay to urge the tardy into quicker motion; mingled shouts, calls, and curses resounded on every side; and for a few minutes confusion seemed worse confounded. But in a short time the last loiterer was hurried away—the last felucca shoved off, and was seen gliding on its course, the sound of its oars almost drowned in the noisy gabble of its Andalusian crew. As soon as the quay became entirely deserted, the military returned within the walls, and a pause of silence ensued—then pealed the sunset gun from the summit of the rock—the drawbridge, by some unseen agency, was rolled slowly back, till it disappeared within the arched passage—the ponderous gates turned on their enormous hinges—and Gibraltar was closed for the night against the world.

Thus shut out at the Water-Port, I directed the boat's crew, in compliance with my orders, to pull round to the Ragged-Staff. The wall at this place is of great height, and near its top is left a small gate, at an elevation of fifty or sixty feet above the quay, which projects into the bay beneath. It is attained by a spiral staircase, erected about twenty feet from the wall, and communicating with it at the

top by means of a drawbridge. This gate is little used, except for the egress of those who are permitted to leave the garrison after nightfall. On reaching the quay, I sprang ashore, and walking to a favourable position, endeavoured to amuse myself once more by contemplating from this new point of view the hills and distant mountains of Spain. But the charm was now fled. Night was fast stealing over the landscape, and rendering its features misty and indistinct: a change, too, had taken place in my own feelings, since, a few hours before, I had found so much pleasure in dwelling on the scene around me. I was now cold, fatigued, and hungry: my eyes had been fed with novelties until they were weary with gazing: my mind had been crowded with a succession of new images, until its vigour was exhausted. I cast my eyes up to the Rock, but it appeared cold and desolate in the deepening twilight, and I turned from its steep, flinty sides, and dreadful precipices, with a shudder. The waves and ripples of the bay, which the increasing evening wind had roughened, broke against the quay where I was standing with a sound that created a chilly sensation at my heart. Even the watch-dog's bark, from on board some vessel in the bay, gave me no pleasure, as it was borne faintly to my ear by the eastern breeze; for it was associated with sounds of home, and awakened me to a painful consciousness of the distance I had wandered, and the fatigues and

perils to which I was exposed; and a train of sombre thoughts, despite my efforts to drive them away, took possession of my mind.

At length, yielding to their influence, I climbed to the top of a rude heap of stones, which had been piled on the end of the pier, and seating myself where my eye could embrace every portion of the shadowy landscape, I gave free rein to melancholy fancies. My wandering thoughts roamed over a thousand subjects; but one subject predominated over all. My memory recalled many images; but one image it presented with the vividness of life, and dwelt on with the partiality of love. It was the image of one who had been the object of my childhood's love, whom I had loved in boyhood, and whom now, in opening manhood, I still loved with a passionate and daily increasing affection. Linked with the memory of that sweet being, came thoughts of the rival who had sought to win her heart from me, and who, foiled in his purpose, had conceived and avowed the bitterest enmity to me:—and from him, my thoughts glided, under the influence of some strange association, to the tall and singular-looking Spaniard whom I had seen at the Water-Port. In this way my vagrant meditations ranged from topic to topic, with all that wildness of transition which is sometimes produced by the excitement of opium.

While thus engaged, I know not how long a time slipped by; but at length my thoughts

began to grow less distinct, and my eyes to feel heavy; and had I not been restrained by a sense of shame and duty as an officer, I should have been glad to resign myself to sleep. My eyelids, in despite of me, did once or twice close for an instant or two; and it was in an effort to arouse myself from one of these little attacks of somnolency, that I was startled by seeing an object before me, the appearance of whom in that place struck me with surprise. The moon had risen, and was just shedding a thin and feeble glimmer over the top of the Rock, the broad deep shadow of which extended almost to the spot where I was sitting. Emerging from this shadow, I saw approaching me the identical Spaniard whose malign expression of countenance and general appearance had so strongly attracted my attention at the Water-Port. That it was the same I could not doubt, for his height, his dress, his air, all corresponded exactly. He had the same long peculiar step; he still wore the same large sombrero, which, as before, was drawn deep over his brows; the same glistening knife was thrust through his sash; and the same fantastically stamped leather gaiters covered his legs. He approached close to me, and in a voice, which, though hardly above a whisper, thrilled me to the bone, informed me that the commodore had sent for me, and bade me follow him. As he spoke these words he turned away, and walked towards the garrison. Shall I own it, gentle read-

er?—A sensation of fear crept over me at the idea that I was to follow this herculean and sinister-looking Spaniard, and I had some faint misgivings whether I ought to obey his summons. But I reflected that he was probably a servant or messenger of some officer or family where the commodore was visiting; that he could have no motive to mislead me; and that, were I to neglect obeying the order through apprehension of its bearer, because he was tall, had whiskers, and wore a sombrero, I should deservedly bring down upon myself the ridicule of every midshipman in the Mediterranean. Besides, thought I, how foolish should I feel, if it should turn out, as is very likely, that this is some ball or party to which the commodore has been urged to stay, and, unwilling to keep me waiting for him so long in this dreary place, he has sent to invite me to join him. This last reflection turned the scale; so slipping down from my perch, I followed towards the gate. The form of the stranger had already disappeared in the shadow of the Rock; but on reaching the foot of the spiral staircase which led up to the drawbridge, I could hear his heavy tread ascending the steps. Directly after, the gate was unbarred, the bridge lowered, and a footstep crossing it announced that the Spaniard was within the walls. I followed as rapidly as I could, and got within the gate just in time to see the form of my conductor disappear round one of the angles of the fortifica-

tions; but quickening my pace, I overtook him as he reached the foot of a path which seemed to ascend towards the southern end of the Rock.

"This way lies the town," said I, pointing in the opposite direction; "you surely have mistaken the route."

The Spaniard made no answer, but pointed with his hand up the narrow and difficult path, and beckoning me to follow him, began the ascent. The moon shone on his countenance for a moment as he turned towards me, and I thought I could perceive that the sinister expression which had been one of the first things that drew my attention to him, was now aggravated into a smile of more decided malignity. I continued to follow, however, and struggled hard to overtake him. But the path was steep and very rugged, and my conductor walked with great speed. His footing seemed sure as that of the mountain goat. I became wearied, exhausted, almost ready to drop with fatigue, and with all my efforts was unable to diminish the interval between us. The ascent continually grew more difficult, and it soon became so steep, indeed, that I could scarcely clamber up it. My feet were bruised through the thin soles of my pumps, and in toiling on my hands and knees over some of the most abrupt pitches, the jagged points of the rock penetrated my flesh. After thus slowly and painfully groping my way for a considerable distance, we at length reach-

ed a place where the path pursued a level course—but what a path! what a place! A narrow ledge, scarce two feet wide, had been formed, partly by nature, partly by art, at the height of a thousand feet above the water, around a sweep of the rock where it rose perpendicularly from its base to its extreme summit. This ledge was covered with loose stones, which, at every step, fell rattling and thundering down the mighty precipice, till the sound died away in the immense depths below. I could not conjecture whither the Spaniard was leading me; but I had now gone too far to think of retreating. Every step was now at the hazard of life. The ledge was so narrow, the loose stones which covered it rolled so easily from under my feet, and my knees trembled so violently from fear and fatigue, that I could scarcely hope to continue much further in safety over such a pathway. At last we reached a broader spot. I sunk down exhausted, yet with a feeling of joy that I had escaped from the perilous path I had just been treading. The Spaniard stood beside me, and I thought a smile of malign satisfaction played round his lips as he looked down upon me, panting at his feet. He suffered me to rest but a moment, when he motioned me to rise. I obeyed the signal, as if it were the behest of my evil genius.

"Look round you," said he, "and tell me what you behold!"

I glanced my eyes round, and shuddering, with-

drew them from the fearful prospect. The ledge or platform on which we were standing was but a few feet square; behind, a large and gloomy cavern opened its black jaws; and in front, the rock descended to the sea with so perpendicular a front, that a stone, dropped from its edge, would have fallen without interruption straight down into the waves.

"Are you ready to make the leap?" said the Spaniard, in a smooth, sneering tone, seeing, and seeming to enjoy, the terror of my countenance.

"For heaven's sake," cried I, "who are you? and why am I made your victim?"

"Look!" cried he, throwing the sombrero from his head, and approaching close to me, "look! know you not these features? They are those of him whose path you have crossed once, but shall never cross again!"

He seized hold of me as he spoke, with a fiendish grasp, and strove to hurl me headlong from the rock. I struggled with all the energy of desperation, and for a moment baffled the design. He released his hold round my body, and stepping back, stood an instant gazing on me with the glaring eyeballs of a tiger about to spring upon its prey; then darting towards me, he grappled me with both hands round the throat, and dragged me, despite my struggling, to the very verge of the precipice. With a powerful exertion of strength, which I was no longer able to resist, he dashed my body over the edge,

and held me out at arm's length above the dread abyss. The agony of years of wretchedness compressed into a single second, could not exceed the horror of the moment I remained so suspended. There was a small tree or bush which grew out of a cleft just beneath the ledge. In my despairing, frantic struggle, I caught hold of a branch of it, just at the critical instant when the Spaniard relaxed his grasp, intending to drop me down the fearful gulf. His purpose was again baffled for another moment of horror. He gnashed his teeth as he saw me swing off upon the fragile branch, which cracked and bent beneath my weight, and, at most, could save me from his fury but for a fleeting moment. That moment seemed too long for his impatient hate. He sprang to the very verge of the ledge, and placing his foot firmly on the tree, pressed it down with all his strength. In vain, with chattering teeth and horror-choked voice, I implored him to desist. He answered not, but stamped furiously on the tree. The root began to give way —the loosened dirt fell from around it—the trunk snapped, cracked, and separated—and the fiend set up an inhuman laugh, which rung in my ears like the mocking of a demon, as down—down—down I fell, through the chill, thick, pitchy air, till striking with a mighty force on the rocks beneath——I waked, and lo, it was a dream!

It was broad daylight. In my sleep I had rolled from

the heap of stones which had furnished me with my evening seat of meditation, and which, during my sleep, had supplied my imagination with abundant materials for yawning gulfs and chasms. The laugh of the infernal Spaniard turned out to be only a burst of innocent merriment at my plight from little Paul Messenger, a rosy, curly-haired midshipman, and one of the finest little fellows in the world. The matter was soon explained. The commodore, returning to the boat, and seeing me sleeping on a bed of my own choosing, as he expressed it, had chosen to punish me by leaving me to my slumbers. So shoving off, without waking me, he had returned to the ship; on reaching which, however, he gave the officer of the deck directions to send a boat for me at daylight. Little Paul, always ready to do a kind act, asked to go officer of her; and we pulled back to the frigate, laughing over my story of the imaginary adventures of the night.

MERRY TERRY.

MERRY TERRY.

His breast with wounds unnumbered riven,
His back to earth, his face to heaven,
Fallen Hassan lies—his unclosed eye
Yet lowering on his enemy,
As if the hour that sealed his fate,
Surviving left his quenchless hate:
And o'er him bends his foe, with brow
As dark as his that bled below.

Byron.

"Come, spin us a yarn, Jack, my boy," said a curly-headed, rosy-cheeked young midshipman, to old Jack Palmer, one evening, as the vessel to which they were attached was running down the Spanish Main, before as sweet a breeze as ever filled a to'gallant-sail. Jack Palmer was an old sea-dog, and a clever fellow,—that is to say, in the Yankee sense of the word. He had seen all sorts of service, and knew all sorts of stories, which were perhaps not the less amusing for the nautical phraseology in which they were expressed. He was master's mate of the gun-deck; but when called upon for a story by Rosy Willy, (the name of the little reefer that had asked Jack for a yarn,) his business for the day

was finished; the grog had been served, the bull stowed away in the spirit-room, and the key of the hatch returned to the master. It was a pleasant evening, too, and as it was only three bells of the second dog-watch, and of course too early to turn in, Jack sat down on the fo'castle chest, and signified his willingness to comply. He was immediately surrounded by a knot of midshipmen, eager to listen; and, after the usual preliminary of a fresh quid, he began as follows:

Merriville Terry, or as they used to call him for shortness, Merry Terry—and a right good name it was, for he was as gay a lark as ever gave life and animation to a steerage mess-table—was one of the noblest middies I ever knew. He was as full of rigs and jokes as a French man-of-war is of music, and they were quite as harmless, too; for Merry never said any thing to hurt a shipmate's feelings, and no one ever thought of getting angry at his fun. There wasn't a reefer in the whole fleet that didn't love him like a brother; nor a luff, that when there was hard duty to do, didn't favour him all he could; for Merry had a delicate constitution, and couldn't stand the rough and tumble of the service as well as some. But he was no skulk, and, blow high or blow low, Merry never shrank from his watch. When the relief was called at night, whether it was calm or storm, all sail or a close-reefed topsail and foresail, it made no difference—on deck he al-

ways was before the sound was out of the bell. He didn't tumble up the hatchway either, as some of you reefers do, with your hands in your beckets, and your bow ports half shut, or fumbling at your button-holes, like a green-horn at a gasket; but up he sprung, wide awake, and rigged from clue to earing, as if all dressed to go ashore on liberty.

As I said afore, every body from stem to stern liked Merry Terry, or for the matter of that, from one end of the navy list to the other—all except one man. As for the sailors, it would have done your heart good to see how they watched his eye when he had charge of the deck, as if they wanted to spell out his orders before he had time to speak 'em. They would do more for a single look of Merry, than for all the curses and damns of the skipper, though backed by the boatswain's mate, with the cats in his hand. It wasn't from any fear of him, you may be sure, for I don't b'lieve Merry ever stopped a man's grog, or as much as gave him a cross word, in his life; but it was from pure love and respect. When he spoke, to be sure, there was something in his tone and manner that seemed to say he must be obeyed; and when he looked at a man who had been cutting up rusties, though he didn't frown, or swell, or try to look big, as I have seen some officers do, yet there was that in his eye which made the stoutest quail. It was just so among the reefers at the mess-table. If two of them were

sky-larking or quarrelling, or doing anything ungentlemanly, Merry would just look at them, and they would leave off at once, and droop their heads like a dog-vane in a calm.

I said every body loved him. I remember once, when we were beating up the Straits, with a Levanter dead ahead, and blowing so heavy it almost took the buttons off our jackets, Merry, some how or other, happened to fall overboard. He had been standing on the taffrel, with his quadrant in his hand, trying to get a chance at a lunar, when all of a sudden the old hulk made a heavy lee-lurch, and away he went splash into the water. Though there was a sea running, like so many mountains chasing each other, yet before you could say Jack Robinson, no less than four stout fellows were overboard after him. It liked to have gone hard with the whole five, for it was more than the stoutest swimmer could do to keep his head above board, and before we could clear away the stern boat—and we didn't stop to cast off the gripes, you may be sure, but cut and slashed away—they were almost out of sight to leeward. Old Tom Bowman, the quarter-gunner, and Bill Williams, the captain of the fo'castle, made out to reach Merry just as he was going down the last time; and though it was as much as their own lives were worth, they held him up till the boat came to their assistance. I well remember the joy of all hands when the boat pulled up under the stern,

near enough for 'em to see that Merry was in it; and when they hooked on the tackles, I don't b'lieve that ever a ship's crew crowded round the bull, when word was passed to splice the main brace, with as much good will as ours ran away with the falls that evening in hoisting up the jolly-boat that had saved Merry Terry.

The day Merry first came aboard our craft is as fresh in my mind as if it was yesterday, and a snug, trim-built little fellow he was, too, as ever broke a a biscuit, or went coxswain of a captain's gig. He was then about as old as rosy Willy here, and much such another; only he was taunter built, and broader in the bows, and carried sail more man-of-war fashion. His eye was as blue as the sea in the tropics, and as bright as the tropic sea sometimes is at night, when it seems all on fire. His head was covered with dark hair, that lay as thick and close as the nap on this monkey-jacket; and his skin was so white and soft, that it always seemed a pity when I saw him standing his watch in the heat of the sun, and his plump little cheeks looking as red as if the blood was going to start right through them. However, he didn't mind it the value of a scupper nail, and I don't know but it did him good, for he grew handsomer as he got a little tanned, and seemed never happier than when he was on duty. He was a little green at first, of course, but there was no such thing as getting the weathergage of Merry, for

as sure as an older reefer tried to run a rig on him, he would just cock up his bright blue eye, and see what the other was up to in the turn of a glass.

It was a long cruise that we were together, and Merry got to be as much of a man in size and appearance as any of us, before it was over, though he couldn't have been more than eighteen then. On our arrival in New-York most of the middies got their walking papers as soon as they could, and made sail each for his home. Merry's connexions lived in Virginia, and it was that way he laid his course, you may be sure. I remember very well the morning when I had the third cutter called away and manned for him; and as we wrung each other's hand at the gangway, neither of us had voice enough to say good-by. My stomach felt all that day as empty as a midshipman's locker, and the ship seemed as lonesome to me as the old brig Nancy did once, when all hands died off with the yellow fever, and left me and the old tom-cat the only living souls aboard of her.

For about two years after Merriville and I parted, I lost the run of my old shipmate. He continued ashore; but I soon got tired of being cooped up in narrow streets, with no chance of seeing more of the sky than chose to shine between the tops of dingy houses. So, happening to hear that some old shipmates had joined a craft then fitting out at Boston, I applied for orders myself, and was soon once more

where I had sea-room to ware and haul upon. That was a short cruise, and by the time twenty months were up we were all home again, the crew discharged, and I, with my hands in my beckets, had nothing in the world to do, but to spin street yarn, and spend my nineteen and one like a gentleman.

The next ship I was ordered to was my own namesake, old Jack Adams. She was lying in Hampton-roads, ready for sea. The first man I met, as I went up the accommodation ladder, was Merry Terry himself, who stood upon the gangway-sill to receive me. I knew him at a glance, though he was a good deal altered; and he knew me, too, as soon as he clapt eyes on me. Merry was by this time about twenty years of age, or thereabouts, and a finer looking fellow never trod the quarter-deck. He had lately lost both his parents, and this had given a sort of sad expression to his countenance that made him appear handsomer than ever. I soon found he was the general favourite on board, as indeed he always was, go where he would; and it was expected that before we sailed he would get his parchment from Washington, and mount a swab. An elegant luff he would have made, too, for if ever man knew how to work a ship, it was Merry Terry. When he had the deck, the old craft herself seemed to know it; and no matter what kind of weather we had, she was sure to behave as obedient as a side-boy. I have seen him put her in stays where there

wasn't a breaker of water to spare, with rocks a-head and a-stern, and the wind whizzing round and round, like a bee in a tar bucket. But when it was "helm's a-lee," and Merry had the trumpet, there was no such thing as missing stays.

I mind I told you a while ago that every body liked Merry Terry, except one man—that man was the skipper. Somehow or other he hated him worse than the devil hates a marine. He used to ride him down like a main tack, and would row him on all occasions, and put him on all sorts of disagreeable duty. It was even thought he had clapped a stopper on his promotion. The story among the reefers went that Merry had come athwart the captain's hawse in some love affair; but whether that was so or not was mere dead-reckoning, for Merry was as close as an oyster, and never spoke a disrespectful word of his commander. In return for all the abuse he received, he would only curl his lip a little, and look at him dead in the eyes—but such a look as he would sometimes give him! I would rather, for my part, have been on short allowance of grog for a month.

Well, things went on in this way for some weeks, till at last sailing orders were given out; and then of course there was no more going ashore for the middies. The boats were run up and stowed; pole to'gallant-masts struck; storm stumps sent up in their places; all hands were called to unmoor, and we

even hove short, so as to be ready to trip and sheet home, whenever word should come from the cabin to that effect. When all this was done, the captain sent up an order to have his gig lowered away and manned, and directly after came on deck himself in a full *rig* of citizen's togs. Merry Terry stood in the gangway, leaning over the hammock cloth, when the boatswain's mate piped away the gigs, and as the familiar sound struck his ear, I noticed that he started and turned pale. It was a glorious night—much such an evening as this, only later, about two or three bells in the first watch, I think. As the captain passed over the gangway, he gave a peculiar kind of a look at Merry—much such a look as a monkey would at a marine after stealing his pipe-clay—and then turning round to the first luff, he said—"Remember, Mr. Orlop, that you are under sailing-orders, and that no one must leave the ship on any pretence." As he spoke this he turned another malicious glance at Merry out of the corner of his eye, and jumping into the stern-sheets of the gig, ordered the men to shove off and let fall.

As long as the sound of the oars in the rowlocks could be heard, Merry stood as still as a stock-fish, his eye following the wake of the boat till it was lost in the haze of distance. When he could neither hear nor see it any longer, he began to walk about as wild as the devil in a gale of wind; and the reefers, who would gladly have done anything they

could to soothe him, saw clear enough that it wasn't a matter for them to meddle with. In the midst of his agitation, a shore-boat came alongside, the waterman in which handed a note up to the middy who went to the gangway to receive it, and immediately shoved off again. The note, of course, was given to the officer of the deck, according to man-of-war fashion, and he being a stately, pompous sort of a fellow, took his own time to send one of the side-boys for a lantern. When the glim came up, he walked to the fife-rail, and looking at the superscription, discovered that it was directed to Merry Terry. The latter eagerly extended his hand for it, and tearing it open, rapidly devoured the contents; then rushing to the gangway, he would have sprung into the shore-boat, which he hoped was still alongside; but during the officer of the deck's delay it had already got far beyond hailing distance. Three or four times Merry paced up and down the deck in violent agitation, his lip as white and quivering as a jib in the wind, and his eyes shining like the top-glim of a Commodore's ship. All at once he walked right up to the first luff, who was standing abaft, leaning on the taffrel, and in a voice that seemed to come from the cable-tier, it was so hoarse and deep, he said,

"Mr. Orlop, I must go ashore to-night."

"You cannot, Mr. Terry, you heard the captain's orders."

"Damn the captain!" (It was the first word I

ever heard Merry swear, though he and I had been messmates going on five years.)

"Mr. Terry, you forget yourself!" answered the first luff, in a firm, yet mild tone. "If you use such language, sir, you will force me to a disagreeable exercise of my duty."

"I mean no disrespect to you, Mr. Orlop," said Merry, partly recollecting himself; "but I am half distracted. If you will lend me your ear, sir, in a more private part of the ship, I will relate to you what may perhaps change your notions of duty."

Mr. Orlop was one of your right sort of officers. He could talk rope and box his compass with any luff in the service, and when there was need of dignity, he was as stiff as a commodore; but besides the knowledge and skill of an able seaman, he had the feelings and address of a perfect gentleman. He, as well as every body else on board, had seen, and felt indignant at the treatment Merry received from the captain; and some of the whispers as to the cause had also reached him. Perceiving that poor Merry was now uncommonly agitated, and all a-hoo, like a Dutchman's anchor, and fearing that he might commit some indiscretion which would call for an unpleasant exercise of authority, he readily complied with his request, and led the way to his own state-room.

The conference, whatever was its nature, was of short duration; but while it lasted, many a curious

glance was cast towards the state-room door, and—I'm most ashamed to own it—many a listening ear was inclined towards the bulk-head. There was little satisfaction got that way, however, for nothing was heard but a low, humming sound, now and then broken by a muttered curse, in Mr. Orlop's voice; and ended at last by a sudden exclamation of that gentleman, loud enough for the whole steerage to hear—ay, and birth-deck in the bargain.

"Enough, Mr. Terry, enough!" cried he. "You shall have it—if it costs me my commission, you shall have it! There is a point where obedience ceases to be a duty. When military discipline conflicts with the principles of honour, I will be the first to set an example of insubordination."

As he spoke thus, the door of the state-room was thrown open with a surge, and the two officers hove suddenly in sight. The cheek and lips of Merry were still pale and quivering, while the face of the other was flushed with a deep red. They both hazed up the companion-ladder as fast as if the drum was beating to quarters, Mr. Orlop scarcely stopping, as he sung out to me—

"Mr. Palmer," said he, "call the boatswain, and order him to get the first cutter out immediately. Do you attend yourself, sir, on the birth-deck, and start up all the men!"

By this time, his foot was on the top step of the

ladder. As soon as his head was fairly above the combings of the hatch, he began again:

"Boatswain's mate!"

"Sir!" sung out old Reuben James, in his peculiar drawl.

"Call away the first cutters, and do you stand by and see to getting up the yard-tackles.—Captain of the fo'castle, there!"

"Sir!" bawled the captain of both starboard and larboard watch at once, startled at the loudness and earnestness of the first lieutenant's voice.

"Lay aloft, and stand by to get your yard-tackles on the fore-yard!—Quarter gunners, do you hear? do you do the same on the main!—Foretop, there! out on the yard with you, and send down a whip for the yard-tackle block!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" promptly answered a voice from the foretop; and with these and similar orders and replies, mixed with the shrill pipings of the boatswain and his mates, the spar-deck now resounded for several minutes, while the men jumped here and there like a gang of green-horns in a squall. But though to an inexperienced eye all might have seemed confusion, yet every man knew his own station and duty, and in less than five minutes the cutter was hoisted out, and brought to at the gangway. She was no sooner there than Merry Terry sprang down the side, and the crew after; who, though they wondered as much as all the rest of us, officers and

men, how all this was to end, yet seeing they would oblige their favourite by moving lively, they shoved off and had up their oars in the crossing of a royal.

"Mr. Terry," cried the first lieutenant, "remember your word of honour that you will return to-night, provided you find or make all safe!"

"Upon my honour," answered Merry, laying his hand on his heart: then turning quickly to the men, "Let fall," he cried, "give way!" and as long as we could hear him, he kept saying every now and then, "give way, my hearties, give way—pull with a will," and such like.

And they did give way, too. They were a set of as stout oarsmen as ever manned a frigate's first cutter; but they never showed themselves afore as they did that night. The boat fairly jumped out of the water every clip, and the foam she dashed off from her bows formed a long, white streak in her wake, as bright and dazzling as the trail of a Congreve rocket. You may think it wasn't many minutes before they reached the shore, going at that rate as if the devil kick'd 'em an end. Merry steered her right head on, and never cried "rowed of all," till she struck the sandy beach with such force that she ran up high and dry, pitching the two bow oarsmen, who had got up to fend off, about half a cable's length from her. At the first grating of the keel upon the gravel, he leaped ashore, and without stopping to say one word to the men, dart-

ed off like a wounded porpoise. For two or three minutes, the boat's crew looked at each other with their eyes stretched wide open, like the mouth of a dying fish, as much as to say, what the devil's all this? And then they began to consult together in a low grumbling tone, as if they were afraid to hear themselves speak, till at last Bill Williams, who was coxswain of the cutter, offered a suggestion that met the approval of the rest.

"Damn my chain-plates," said he, "only hark how his feet go clatter-clatter-clatter, as fast as the flopping of a jib-sheet in the wind. I'm afear'd, my hearties, that Mr. Terry's running 'mongst the breakers, and if you'll stay by the boat, I'll give chase—and, if so needs be, lend him a lift."

The proposal of the honest coxswain was relished by his comrades, and he accordingly ran up the bank, and followed in the same direction that his young officer had taken. But Bill Williams, though he could run about a ship's rigging like a monkey in mischief, was no match for Merry in a land chase. His sea-legs was'nt used to such business, and he went pitching and heaving a-head like a Dutch lugger afore the wind, and seemed, at every step, to be watching for the weather roll.

In the mean time, Merry linked it off like a Baltimore clipper going large. He had run perhaps about a mile from the boat, along the road which he struck into directly after leaving the beach, and

instead of shortening sail, appeared to be crowding more and more canvass all the time, when all of a sudden, he luffed up, and hove to, on hearing the clatter of an approaching carriage. The noise of the wheels sounded nearer and nearer, as they came rattling along the rough road, and it wasn't long before the quick trampling of the horses, and the clicking of their shoes against the stones, indicated that they were close aboard. The place were Merry lay to was about midships of a steep hill, and if he had picked out the spot it couldn't have been better suited to his purpose. The road, which had been rough and uneven from the first, was at this point broken into deep gullies by recent heavy rains, rendering, apart from the difficulty of the ascent, extreme caution necessary in passing with a vehicle. On one side, a steep wooded bank rose to a considerable height; and on the other, the surface of the ground gradually descended to the water, which was not quite excluded from view by a few scattering trees, that occupied the intermediate space.

Behind one of these trees, which grew close to the road-side, and threw a deep shadow over it, Merry, gritting and grinding his teeth, crouched down, like a young shark watching for his prey. The carriage had already gained the foot of the hill, and was slowly labouring up, when a deep gruff voice from within cried out to the driver, bidding him drive faster. At the sound of that voice, Merry's eyes

fairly flashed fire. The coachman, with instinctive obedience, cracked his whip, and was about to make a more effectual application of it, when his eyes encountered a figure which suddenly sprang from the road-side, and seizing the reins, commanded him to halt! The command, however, was scarcely necessary. The jaded horses had reached a short level stage in the ascent, and not even the sound of the whip had induced them to budge tack or sheet. Merry, with a sailor's quick eye, saw this favourable circumstance, and in an instant was at the side of the carriage, within which a voice of a very different tone from that which before issued thence, was earnestly beseeching succour.

"Help! for heaven's sake, help! save me from a ruffian!" cried a female, in imploring accents.

The last words were scarcely articulate, and were uttered with a smothered sound, accompanied with a noise of struggling, as if the ruffian was endeavouring to hold the lady still, and to silence her cries by pressing his hand upon her mouth.

The incentive of this well known voice seemed hardly wanting to add more fury to the rage of Merriville. Choking with mingled emotions, he called to the ruffian to hold off his hand, and, with an effort of desperate strength tearing open the door, the fastenings of which he did not understand, he

seized the inmate by the collar, and dragged him to the ground.

"Seducer!—scoundrel!—ruffian!" he cried, "I have you in the toils, and dearly you shall rue this night's work!"

"Mr. Terry!—I command—you shall suffer for this—a court-martial—" and various other broken ejaculations were uttered by the wretch, who violently struggled to get loose from the firm grasp in which he was held. Merriville, though not of a robust constitution, yet possessed much muscular strength. In the present contest every fibre received tenfold vigour from the energy of his feelings, making him an overmatch for the guilty being who writhed within his arms. The faces of both were inflamed and convulsed with violent passions, though of a widely and obviously different character; for the rage of the one, though fierce as ten furies, had yet something noble and commanding in it, while that of the other seemed kindled by a demon. The clear round moon shone down on the occurrence with a silvery brightness, which, while it made every feature of the scene perfectly visible, imparted to the pallid faces, glaring eyeballs, and quivering lips of the combatants a more ghastly and terrible expression than they derived from their own wild passions. The captain (for it's useless to tell you it was he) struggled hard, but was evidently becoming exhausted. In the excess of his emotion he

had bitten his lip nearly in two, and the blood which, in their tossing to and fro, had been smeared over the faces and clothes of both; added to the wildness of their appearance.

The female, who by this time had recovered from the swoon into which she fell when she first heard the voice of Merriville, now screamed as she saw the blood with which he was profusely stained, and probably imagining him mortally wounded, she sprang from the carriage, and tottered towards him across the road. A sudden movement of the two combatants, at the same moment, changed their position so as to bring the back of Merriville towards the approaching figure, and at that instant, his antagonist, succeeding in releasing an arm from his grasp, hastily drew a pistol from his pocket, cocked, and fired it. The ball whizzed through the air, only slightly grazing the neck of the intended victim; but a piercing shriek from the lips of the female, heard above the loud report, announced that it had done more fatal execution in another quarter. As if by mutual consent, both parties ceased from their struggle for a moment, and rushed towards her. She staggered two or three steps forward, mumbled a few scarce audible words, among which the name of Merriville was the only intelligible sound, and fell bleeding to the earth. The horses, in the mean while, scared by the near and loud report of the pistol,

pranced suddenly round, and dashing down the hill, were soon lost to sight.

Poor Merriville, with a groan of agony, which he could not, which he did not seek to repress, bent over the form which lay stretched and pale before him, and raising it partly from the ground, gazed for a stupid moment, in utter unconsciousness of all things else, upon the features of her still lovely face. The ball had passed directly through the heart, from which life had already bubbled out in a crimson tide, though a few darker drops continued to ooze from the livid orifice of the wound. Merriville whispered her name, but she answered not. In vain he leaned his ear to her lips, or bent his eyes upon them, till the hot, tearless balls seemed bursting from their sockets—no sound, no motion, made reply. He laid his hand upon her heart—but its pulse was still. He looked into her eyes—but they returned not, as they were wont, an answering look: their light had gone out—the spirit had departed from its house of clay—she was dead, quite dead!

As this fact impressed itself upon his brain, a maddening consciousness of the cause seemed slowly to return; his eyes rolled up till the balls were almost hid, his face became of a livid darkness, and his teeth were clenched together, like those of one in mortal agony. Starting up, he turned suddenly round, and with his arms extended, and his fingers curved like the talons of an eagle, he sprang towards

his guilty commander. The motion seemed to have been anticipated, for the wretch had prepared himself with a second pistol, which, as his antagonist approached, he deliberately aimed at him, and fired. Whether the ball took effect or not, it did not defeat poor Merry's object. He darted like a hungry tiger on the wretch, and with both hands seizing him round the throat, he dragged him down to the earth. In vain his victim struggled—the sinews of his antagonist seemed hardened into steel. He tried to shriek for aid, but the grasp around his neck choked his utterance, and his words died away in a rattling sound, like the gurgling in the throat of a drowning man. With a strength that seemed supernatural, Merriville raised him from the earth, and dragged him along the road. The struggling of the wretched man grew fainter and fainter, but still an occasional convulsive quivering of the limbs told that he lived. His face was almost black, his tongue lolled out of his mouth like a dog's, and his eyes, bloodshot and glassy, protruded in a hideous manner from their sockets. Blood had started from his nostrils in his mortal agony, and a thick wreath of mingled blood and foam stood upon his lips, which, wide distended, seemed stretched in a horrid laugh.

In silence, and with a strength that seemed more than human, Merriville continued to drag his victim along, till he reached the boat. He had been met by Williams not far from the scene of the first part

of the contest, but he appeared not to see him. Williams on his part was too much awed to speak. The firing of the pistols had prepared him for some fatal event; for he had a dim and dark suspicion of the object of Merriville's errand, inasmuch as he had been the bearer of several notes between him and his betrothed; and had heard, also, that his captain was a rejected suitor for the same hand. One glance at the group served to show him the dreadful nature of the burden Merriville dragged along with him: he saw that his commander was already a corpse, and besides, he was too much intimidated by the unnatural lustre of Merriville's eye, by his pallid and unearthly hue, and by his still and terrible bearing, to interrupt the silence with a word. As they approached the boat, Williams waved his hand to the crew, who were anxiously waiting on the beach, and signified by an expressive nod that they must not speak. Silently and sorrowfully they followed their young officer to the water's edge, entered after him the boat, and commenced rowing back to the ship. Poor Terry, still holding the body by the throat, took his seat in the stern-sheets, and leaned his head down on the gunwale in such a way that his garments concealed his face. The face of the corpse, however, was exposed in the broad moonlight; and as the head hung partly over the seat, with its features distorted and bloody, its hair matted with clots of blood and earth, and its glassy eyeballs

apparently staring at the men, a superstitious shudder crept over them, which, with all their manhood, they could not repress.

In this way, and in silence, they drew near the ship. The sentinel hailed them; but no answer was returned. As they came to at the gangway, the officer of the deck called Mr. Terry by name; but still no reply. He saw by the terror painted on the countenances of the crew that something dreadful had occurred, and descended quickly into the boat, where the whole terrible truth was soon ascertained. They were both dead! By the discharge of the second pistol, Merriville had been mortally wounded, and his life had oozed away, while his hands were still clasped with desperate energy round the throat of his victim. Even after death his fingers did not lose their tenacity. The officer tried to unlock the death-grasp but without effect; and the two bodies locked in an embrace, which, stronger than that of love, had outlasted life, were obliged to be hoisted up together.

* * * * * * *

Just as Jack Palmer arrived at this part of his yarn, all hands were called to stand by their hammocks, and the bustle incident to that piece of duty put an abrupt end to his story.

THE MESS-CHEST.

THE MESS-CHEST.

The devil himself will not eat a woman!
Antony and Cleopatra.

THERE are not many names on the list of those who have sacrificed their lives for freedom which deserve more honourable mention than that of Riego. I was in the Mediterranean at the time of the brave attempt which terminated so fatally for him; and I well remember how eagerly we sought every disjointed scrap of intelligence which could be gathered concerning the romantic adventures of Mina with his little army in Catalonia, and the firm and prudent efforts of his noble compatriot Riego. Old Port Mahon, according to custom, had been chosen for the winter-quarters of our squadron; and though the Mahonese were by no means well affected to the cause of Ferdinand, yet the habitual caution and reserve of those islanders prevented their giving a very full account of what little they knew concerning the progress of events on the continent. Such drops of news as dribbled from them, therefore, rather increased than quenched the flame of curiosity. This had arisen to a great height, when it was at

last suddenly and sadly extinguished by the arrival of a little polacca from Barcelona, which brought the melancholy tidings of the defeat and flight of Mina, and of the capture and execution of his brother in arms. This vessel had been despatched to Mahon with an official account of the triumphant entry of Ferdinand into Madrid, just six days after the inhabitants of that city had witnessed the public termination of Riego's eventful career.

There were bonfires and illuminations in Mahon on the receipt of the intelligence; but these outward demonstrations of rejoicing were rendered by fear, not gladness, and were as false as the hollow-hearted monarch whose success they were kindled to celebrate. Had the despatches communicated news of his death, and of the triumph of the constitution, the revelry would have been another sort of affair: the faces of the people, as well as their casements, would have been lighted up for joy; and hearts, as well as feet, would have joined in the bolero and fandango, and bounded to the music of the merry castinets.

One evening, during these mock rejoicings, I went on shore with Charles Maitland, one of our lieutenants, and as fine a fellow as ever trod a frigate's quarter-deck. He was young in commission, having been but recently promoted, after a tedious service of two whole lustres in the subordinate capacity of midshipman, during which period he had been the object of a full share of the "fantastic tricks" which

naval commanders sometimes choose to play off upon those beneath them. When I say beneath them, I mean this phrase, so far as Charles Maitland is concerned, to apply only to the scale of military gradation; for in any other respect he was beneath no man in the service. It had been his lot, as well as mine, to sail with a commander who omitted no opportunity of proving his title to the nautical distinction he enjoyed, of being "the hardest horse in the navy." But those days were over now; and the more elevated rank, and more definite and important duties of a lieutenant, secured him, in a good measure, from a renewal of such annoyances.

Almost immediately on reaching the dignity of an epaulette, Charles married a sweet girl, to whom he had been long attached, and whom his narrow and uncertain resources had alone prevented him from espousing before. I stood groomsman on the occasion; and I remember well how handsome the fellow looked, as he led his blushing bride to the altar. A forty-four, convoying a trig, snug, clean-rigged little Baltimore clipper, could not appear more stately than he did alongside that modest and well-modelled girl. The truth is, Charley was one of the finest looking men in the service—tall, well-built, round-chested, with an eye like an eagle's, and a mouth, the habitual smile of which, or rather a slight pleasant curve approaching to a smile, denoted an excellent disposition. And never did dog-vane show the course

of the wind better than that smile expressed his temper. But I am wandering from my story.

The honey-moon—that briefest moon which ever sheds its light on the matrimonial state—had hardly yet begun to wane, when Charles was ordered to sea in old Ironsides. The old craft was lying in the harbour, her topsails loose, her anchor short-stay apeak, and all ready to trip, sheet home, and be off. His name had been pitched upon at the last moment, to supply a vacancy left by somebody who had begged off; and as there was now no time for remonstrance, he had nothing to do but obey. I am no hand for painting scenes of the tender sort; so I leave Charley's parting with his young wife, and all that, "to sympathetic imaginations," as the girl in the play has it.

But, avast a bit and belay there! What am I doing all this while? A pretty piece of lee-way I have made of it! Here were we, a moment since, snugly moored in the harbour of Mahon, for winter-quarters; and now, in the turning of a glass, have I put the Atlantic between us and the scene of my story. Well, stations for stays!—helm's a-lee, and about she goes! And we must now crack on all sail, and make a short cruise of it, till we get back to our starting point. There is no time for buckling knee-buckles, as the boatswain's mate says, when he calls all hands in a squall at night; so, to

make a short story of it, let it suffice to say, that Charles bade adieu to his wife, old Ironsides sailed, reached the Mediterranean in due time, went the usual rounds over that cruising ground, (delightful cruising ground it is, by the way,) and was now in daily expectation of the relief-ship, with orders for her to return to the United States.

Well, as I said before, Mahon was all in a bustle on account of the news from the continent. Bells were ringing, music playing, bonfires shone in one place, and illuminations glittered in another. Groups of people, of all ages and conditions, were in every square and open place; and the expression of many a pretty face that peeped from the folds of the red mantilla, or the scowl of many a dark eye that glared beneath the shadow of the sombrero, denoted any thing but pleasure at the intelligence which had been received. Of all the difficult tasks in this world, there is none harder than to put on the semblance of joy at that which stirs righteous indignation; and he who can best dissemble in such cases—no matter how strong the motive—is not the man I should choose for my friend.

Well, Charles and I went ashore one evening, as I said, during the rejoicings. We had no other object in view than to take a long stroll together, along the romantic shores of one of the prettiest and quietest bays in the world, and to converse without restraint (that, at least, I supposed was his motive)

on the topic which was ever uppermost in his mind. We were yet in the midst of the town, and were threading our way through the crowd in one of the principal squares, when a woman—and a pretty old one too, as well as one might judge by the withered and sallow face which her thread-bare mantle was so disposed as only half to betray—suddenly presented herself before us, and whispered a single word, in a low guttural voice, to my companion. One who has sat as many long cold watches as I have on the look-out, on the foretopsail-yard, naturally has a quick eye; and it therefore did not escape me that this old woman, as she spoke to Charles, slipped a note into his hand. She then passed on, mixed with the throng, and in an instant disappeared from my following glance. In Spain, the country of intrigue and romantic adventure, there was nothing so very singular in this as to justify great surprise; and perhaps the circumstance would soon have passed from my mind altogether, had not subsequent events, which I could not but consider in some way connected with it, kept it continually in my thoughts.

On reaching the first convenient place, Charles paused to peruse the billet. Its contents, whatever they were, seemed to engage him deeply. He stood pondering over the paper for several moments, with the air of one in earnest and perplexed meditation; and then suddenly crumpling it in his hand,

and thrusting it into his pocket, cast round him a quick and apprehensive glance, as if fearful that some one might have overlooked him. There was more confusion in his manner, and more hesitancy in his speech, than I had ever before seen him exhibit, when he approached me, a moment or two after this, and said that an unexpected engagement would oblige him to forgo the intended walk, and leave me to pursue my way alone.

I had known Charles Maitland from a boy. We had studied our lessons on the same form; had shot our marbles into the same ring; had entered the navy within a few weeks of each other; had been shipmates and messmates through two long and eventful cruises, and a good part of the time had been watchmates. I knew that he had a soul of honour; that his principles were well established, his head clear, his morality nice, and that he loved his young wife with the most ardent attachment. Yet for all this, I could not help feeling a certain indefinite fear that there was something wrong connected with that note. It could not be a challenge; for he was beloved by all the officers in the squadron, and I was very sure he had not been embroiled in any quarrel on shore. Besides, if it were so, he would have applied to me as his friend;—and then, again, women are not chosen as bearers of such messages. Yet that the subject, whatever it might be, was of no ordinary kind, was evident from the im-

pression which the perusal occasioned, and not less evident from his withholding the matter from me. Our communion had always been of the most frank and unreserved description; we had been sharers of each other's thoughts, sentiments, and wishes, from boyhood up; I had been in his full confidence through his whole course of wooing; and indeed, until the present moment, he had never shown a desire to keep any thing from my knowledge. Reflections of this kind caused me to give undue importance, perhaps, to the circumstance which had just occurred. I began to fear that Charles was in some way concerned in an unworthy adventure; and a vague suspicion, which I did not like to entertain, and yet could not altogether reject, took possession of my mind, that a woman was at the bottom of it. I turned with a slow step towards the quay, and descended the long lateral road that is excavated from the perpendicular cliff which overlooks the bay, humming, as I went, "Though love is warm awhile," &c.

From this day forward, Charles's visits to the shore were more frequent than before, but always in the evening, and now he invariably went alone. If other officers happened to go in the same boat, he was sure to separate himself from them on reaching the quay, and pursue a direction different from the rest. This soon came to eb noticed, and to be talked of, and it was whispered about in the mess, that on

two or three occasions, he had been seen, late in the evening, walking with a female closely muffled, in an unfrequented and lonely part of the shore, at some distance from the town. Different officers professed to have seen this female with him, and their descriptions of her person tallied with each other. In the minds of the mess generally, who did not know Charles so thoroughly as I, and whose morality was not of so scrupulous a kind as his—or as I had always thought his to be—this matter created no surprise, and was only laid hold of as furnishing an opportunity for sundry nautical jokes and witticisms. These jests, however, met with such a reception as by no means encouraged those who offered them to a repetition.

It chanced one day that Charles and I were sent on shore on a piece of duty together, and that our business lay in the quarter of the town to which it had been noticed that he always directed his steps. As we passed through the streets, we perceived there was a considerable hubbub among the inhabitants, and we soon ascertained that this was occasioned by a party of soldiers who had lately arrived from the Maine, commissioned to search the island for certain proscribed constitutionalists, who were supposed to have taken refuge in Minorca. A good many of these wretched fugitives had been discovered and executed; but the individual against whom the proclamation of Ferdinand was chiefly

directed, had hitherto eluded the vigilance of the bloodhounds. This person was a brave young chief, who had filled a confidential and important post under Riego, and who, by his intrepidity, activity, and ceaseless vigilance, had been greatly instrumental in the success of that partisan warfare in Catalonia, which cost the royalists so much blood and treasure, and so long upheld the sinking hopes of his compatriots. To seize and slay Don Castro de Valero, the name of the youthful and interesting chief, was deemed so important an object by the monarch, that immense rewards had been offered for his apprehension, and parties had been sent in every direction in which rumour alleged that he had fled. The troop of mercenaries who had been despatched to Mahon, were stimulated by the hope of reward, to much greater activity than usually characterizes Spanish soldiers, who are at once a by-word for indolence and rapacity. They had closely searched the house of every person suspected of the slightest disaffection, and had followed every imaginary clue with the keenest zeal of avarice. They had even visited the foreign national ships in the port, and had procured strict orders to be issued, forbidding the officers from harbouring or rendering any assistance to those who were held as traitors by the government within whose waters we lay.

On the afternoon in question, in consequence of certain hints which had been communicated to

this party, they had renewed their search, and at the time we came up were about entering an humble dwelling, which, as I learned from the crowd, was occupied by a poor old widow woman and her neice. We were yet at some distance when we noticed the house at which the soldiers paused, and we could perceive the withered old duenna standing on her threshold, throwing her arms about with great vehemence, and sputtering with amazing volubility every variety of gutteral execration, of which the Spanish language has so large a store.

The blood mounted to Charles's forehead, and fire to his eye, as this sight drew his attention; and springing forward with great eagerness, he rushed by the crowd of mendicants and idle spectators whom the circumstance had collected, broke through the ranks of the soldiers, and stood in the midst of the dwelling, before the foremost of their number had gained admittance.

I did not pause to consider whether this impetuosity of my friend arose from a generous but imprudent feeling of indignation at the object of their search, or from some less selfish motive; but made all haste to follow him. My progress, however, met with more obstruction than his unlooked-for movement, and I was not able to rejoin him for more than a minute. When I at length forced my way into the building, I found him defending a door which led to an inner apartment, and surrounded by the merce-

naries, all jabbering their vehement and incoherent menaces. As yet, no blow had been struck; but it was evident, from the violence of their gestures, that hostilities would not much longer be delayed.

As I entered, they huddled closer around my companion; and pushing against him with one sudden and united impulse, the door broke from its fastenings, and the whole party fell together on the floor.

I have said before that Charles was strong and agile; but I was not prepared for such a display of muscular energy and activity as he now exhibited in releasing himself from the superincumbent crowd of prostrate and grappling soldiers. In an instant he was on his feet, and beside a bed, which I now observed in one corner of the room. The apartment was lighted by a curtained lattice; but though the illumination was not strong, particularly to vision that had just passed from the broad glare of day, it was sufficient to show that the bed was occupied by a female, who had partly risen from the couch, and whose cheek was flushed, and whose dark eyes glowed like fire, probably with indignation at this rude intrusion. Charles threw his arms round the neck of the female, replaced her head upon the pillow, kissed her burning brow, and with a tremulous, but soothing voice, bade her not be alarmed, for that he would defend her with his life: then turning sternly to the leader of the Spanish soldiers, he commanded him to

pursue his search with all despatch, and leave the apartment.

The Spaniards, who by this time had risen to their feet, looked at each other, at Charles, and at the female, with blank astonishment; nor was their confusion lessened by the torrent of invective which the old woman, who had now also entered the room, poured out upon their heads. The officer who had charge of the party, after a moment spent in casting scrutinizing glances into every corner of the room, directed his men to withdraw; and then mumbling out an apology, in which he intimated, with an impudent leer, that he was now convinced that Charles's visits to this house had a different object from what had been suspected, he also left the apartment. There was no further excuse for me to protract my stay, and I turned and followed his retreating steps.

"She is handsome," thought I, as I walked slowly up the street, pondering on the secret which had thus been accidentally revealed to me, and thinking how I might disentangle my friend from the net of this fair Spanish woman—"yes, she is handsome—just the cast of countenance I should suppose would have fascination for one of his brave and romantic nature. Her black and piercing eye, her noble profile, the scornful expression of her lip as she darted her keen glance upon the soldiers—these traits of beauty did not escape me, feebly lighted as her apartment was." And my mind reverted from this Spanish paramour

to the contemplation of the delicate and tender beauties of the fair-cheeked and blue-eyed wife, who, far away, was anxiously counting the hours that should restore her husband to her arms, and who herself incapable of change, had probably never entertained a doubt of his fidelity. I am not much given to the melting mood, but I confess my meditations on this subject drew from me a heartfelt sigh.

I was still brooding on what I had just seen, when Charles rejoined me. The few words which passed between us on our meeting satisfied me that that was not the time for expostulation or rebuke. He bade me remember that I owed to accident the discovery I had made, and enjoined upon me, by our ancient friendship, neither to question him nor utter a syllable to any other person. I gave the required promise the more readily, as I reflected that in a very few days we should sail, and that distance, in all probability, would put an end to this unworthy attachment, as it had made him forgetful of the ties of honourable love. We soon executed the duty we were sent upon, and returned to the ship.

The relief-vessel, of which we had been in daily expectation, arrived on the evening after this adventure, and sailing orders were thereupon immediately issued. All further going ashore was forbidden; and the signal, commanding on board all who were ashore, was run up at the fore. Charles was among

this number, and by all but him the order was promptly and gladly obeyed. A fine breeze had sprung up at sunset, and for more than an hour we lay waiting for him with our anchor apeak, and our loosed topsails flapping idly against the mast. The capstan-bars were shipped and manned, the crew all at their stations, the accommodation-ladder unrigged, and every thing ready to be off. The commodore walked the quarter-deck with quick, impatient steps, and murmurs were heard from various groups, chiding the delay of the dilatory officer. A midshipman, who had been despatched in one of the cutters for him, had returned some time before, after a fruitless search.

At length the patience of our commander was entirely exhausted, and he had given the order to weigh and make sail, when the quartermaster on the look-out hailed a boat, which had just pulled into sight through the gathering dusk of evening. The answer of "Ay, ay!" told that it was Charles, and directly after a shore-boat glided alongside. In reply to the sharp rebuke of the commodore for having been so tardy in obeying the signal, he said something about the necessity he had been under of purchasing certain stores for the mess; though it was observed that his explanation had not all the clearness of tone and manner which usually characterized his official communications. The displeasure which the delay had occasioned, was not

diminished when it was found that the mess-chest, in which he had brought off these stores, was so large and cumbrous, that a yard-tackle had to be got on the main-yard in order to hoist it on board. The men themselves, though Charles was a great favourite with them, seemed not well pleased that he had caused so long a detention; and when the tackle was hooked on, they ran away with the fall with a degree of spiteful velocity that made the chest ascend swiftly to the yard-block before the boatswain's mate could pipe belay. My eye happened to be fixed on Charles while this manœuvre was performed, and I thought he evinced more anxiety on the subject than a few sea-stores were worth. The chest, however, was lowered more gently than it was hoisted, and by Charles's direction was conveyed into his own state-room. The ship now got under way, the canvass swelled out to the breeze, and the Mahonese pilot, for a time commander of our frigate, took his stand on the after-hammock-cloths, and issued his orders in the dictatorial tone which persons dressed "in a little brief authority" are wont to use. In less than an hour we were laying our course, under a pleasant topgallant breeze, for the Straits of Gibraltar.

I need not dwell on the incidents of our homeward passage; for I have no storms or shipwrecks to tell of—no hairbreadth escapes, or moving accidents of any description. A mystery seemed to hang

round the mess-chest in Charles's state-room, and some strange stories got to be whispered through the ship concerning it. For my part, I had my own suspicions, and they were of a kind which troubled me a good deal. One thing we all noticed; that though this chest professedly contained stores for the mess, no stores were ever produced from it. On the contrary, it was affirmed, that various delicacies from our table found their way to the chest. Another voice than Charles's, too, it was said, had been heard there, two or three different times; and one young officer, more prying than the rest, whispered to his companions that through a crevice of the state-room door, he had once beheld a female figure sitting in the narrow apartment. A fresh, fair wind, and a short passage, allowed less time for gossip of this sort than there would otherwise have been; and the demeanour of Charles, too, was not of a kind to encourage loose jests or idle curiosity.

We at length came to anchor in the noble bay of New-York. I remember the evening well. I remember how gloriously the sun, as it sunk behind the romantic promontory of Weehawken, burnished the spires, roofs, and windows of the city, till it seemed a city of sapphire, and topas, and gold. And when those hues faded away, and night succeeded, I remember how beautiful its thousands of lamps shone through the darkness, while every here and there a long

thread of fire ascended into the air, denoting the spots where gay throngs were assembled for evening recreation. At last the full round moon rose over all, shedding its mellow lustre through the night, and gilding the broad and beautiful bay, till every ripple glistened in its light with the brilliancy of molten silver.

I had the first watch that evening; and as I paced the deck to and fro, various mixed emotions occupied my breast. Charles and his poor wife were prominent subjects of my thoughts; and I need hardly tell the reader that I feared the happiness of the latter was about to receive a cruel shock. And yet I had some strange misgivings on this head.

As many officers as could be spared from the ship had been permitted to leave her, and Charles was among the number. The same big, clumsy, cumbrous chest, which had already been the subject of so many painful reflections in my mind, accompanied him; and I was half disposed to turn away from him in anger, when he paused at the gangway to say a parting word to me. "You will breakfast with Matilda and me, to-morrow morning?" said he, and a faint smile curled his lip as he gave the invitation. I could not satisfy myself wholly what was the meaning of that smile; and in pondering upon that and other kindred topics, my watch passed away, and my relief was on deck before I was aware that half the time had expired.

Never was guest more punctual to his appointment than I was with Charles the following morning. As I entered the hall, the first thing I noticed was the mess-chest, which had given me so much uneasiness. In the breakfast parlour I found my friend and his sweet wife. She was all radiant in smiles, and never before looked half so charming. Charles looked happy, too—very happy; but there was an expression of mischief mingled with his smile that I could not exactly comprehend. The explanation, however, was at hand. In the recess of one of the windows sat a young man, whom I had not noticed as I entered the room. Charles turned to introduce me to him. It was the young and handsome chief, Don Castro De Valero; and, as he rose and extended his hand to me, I caught a side view of his features, and beheld the same noble profile which had so struck me in the supposed niece of the old duenna in Mahon. I comprehended the whole mystery now in a moment, and only wondered at my stupidity in not conjecturing the truth before.

"And you see," said Charles, "that I was not so great a villain as you were inclined to think me."

"Forgive me, my dear friend. But why this long concealment? Surely, after we were at sea——"

"We were officers of a national vessel," said he, "and our government was responsible for any vio-

lation of the strict laws of neutrality. If the king of Spain could show that De Valero was brought to this country by one of our frigates, how should we resist his right to have him rendered up? How he reached this country is therefore his own secret; and, remember, you yet only know by conjecture the contents of the mess-chest."

THE MAIN-TRUCK,

OR

A LEAP FOR LIFE.

THE MAIN-TRUCK, OR A LEAP FOR LIFE.

> Stand still! How fearful
> And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!
> The murmuring surge,
> That on th' unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
> Cannot be heard so high:—I'll look no more;
> Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
> Topple down headlong.
>
> *Shakspeare.*

Among the many agreeable associates whom my different cruisings and wanderings have brought me acquainted with, I can scarcely call to mind a more pleasant and companionable one than Tom Scupper. Poor fellow! he is dead and gone now—a victim to that code of false honour which has robbed the navy of too many of its choicest officers. Tom and I were messmates during a short and delightful cruise, and, a good part of the time, we belonged to the same watch. He was a great hand to spin yarns, which, to do him justice, he sometimes did tolerably well; and many a long mid-watch has his fund of anecdote and sea stories caused to slip pleasantly away. We were lying in the open roadstead of

Laguyra, at single anchor, when Tom told me the story which I am about to relate, as nearly as I can remember, in his own words. A vessel from Baltimore had come into Laguyra that day, and by her I had received letters from home, in one of which there was a piece of intelligence that weighed heavily on my spirits. For some minutes after our watch commenced, Tom and I walked the deck in silence, which was soon, however, interrupted by my talkative companion, who, perceiving my depression, and wishing to divert my thoughts, told me the story which I am now about to relate for the entertainment of the reader.

The last cruise I made in the Mediterranean, said he, was in old Ironsides, as we used to call our gallant frigate. We had been backing and filling for several months on the western coast of Africa, from the Canaries down to Messurado, in search of slave traders; and during that time we had had some pretty heavy weather. When we reached the Straits, there was a spanking wind blowing from about west-south-west; so we squared away, and, without coming-to at the Rock, made a straight wake for old Mahon, the general rendezvous and place of refitting for our squadrons in the Mediterranean. Immediately on arriving there, we warped in alongside the Arsenal quay, where we stripped ship to a girtline, broke out the holds, tiers, and store-rooms, and gave her a regular-built overhaul-

ing from stem to stern. For a while, every body was busy, and all seemed bustle and confusion. Orders and replies, in loud and dissimilar voices, the shrill pipings of the different boatswain's mates, each attending to separate duties, and the mingled clatter and noise of various kinds of work, all going on at the same time, gave something of the stir and animation of a dock-yard to the usually quiet arsenal of Mahon. The boatswain and his crew were engaged in fitting a new gang of rigging; the gunner in repairing his breechings and gun-tackles; the fo'castle-men in calking; the top-men in sending down the yards and upper spars; the holders and waisters in whitewashing and holy-stoning; and even the poor marines were kept busy, like beasts of burden, in carrying breakers of water on their backs. On the quay, near the ship, the smoke of the armourer's forge, which had been hoisted out and sent ashore, ascended in a thin column through the clear blue sky; from one of the neighbouring white stone warehouses the sound of saw and hammer told that the carpenters were at work; near by, a live-lier rattling drew attention to the cooper, who in the open air was tightening the water-casks; and not far removed, under a temporary shed, formed of spare studding-sails and tarpaulins, sat the sailmaker and his assistants, repairing the sails, which had been rent or injured by the many storms we had encountered.

Many hands make light work, and in a very few days all was accomplished: the stays and shrouds were set up, and new rattled down, the yards crossed, the running rigging rove, and sails bent; and the old craft, fresh painted and all a-taunt-o, looked as fine as a midshipman on liberty. In place of the storm-stumps, which had been stowed away among the booms and other spare spars, amidships, we had sent up cap to'gallant-masts and royal-poles, with a sheave for skysails, and hoist enough for sky-scrapers above them: so you may judge the old frigate looked pretty taunt. There was a Dutch line-ship in the harbour; but though we only carried forty-four to her eighty, her main-truck would hardly have reached to our royal-mast-head. The side-boys, whose duty it was to lay aloft and furl the skysails, looked no bigger on the yard than a good-sized duff for a midshipman's mess, and the main-truck seemed not half as large as the Turk's-head-knot on the man-ropes of the accommodation ladder.

When we had got every thing shipshape and man-of-war fashion, we hauled out again, and took our berth about half way between the arsenal and Hospital island; and a pleasant view it gave us of the town and harbour of old Mahon, one of the safest and most tranquil places of anchorage in the world. The water of this beautiful inlet—which, though it makes about four miles into the land, is

not much over a quarter of a mile in width—is scarcely ever ruffled by a storm; and on the delightful afternoon to which I now refer, it lay as still and motionless as a polished mirror, except when broken into momentary ripples by the paddles of some passing waterman. What little wind there had been in the fore part of the day, died away at noon, and, though the first dog-watch was almost out, and the sun near the horizon, not a breath of air had risen to disturb the deep serenity of the scene. The Dutch liner, which lay not far from us, was so clearly reflected in the glassy surface of the water, that there was not a rope about her, from her main-stay to her signal halliards, which the eye could not distinctly trace in her shadowy and inverted image. The buoy of our best bower floated abreast our larboard bow; and that, too, was so strongly imaged, that its entire bulk seemed to lie above the water, just resting on it, as if upborne on a sea of molten lead; except when now and then, the wringing of a swab, or the dashing of a bucket overboard from the head, broke up the shadow for a moment, and showed the substance but half its former apparent size. A small polacca craft had got under way from Mahon in the course of the forenoon, intending to stand over to Barcelona; but it fell dead calm just before she reached the chops of the harbour; and there she lay as motionless upon the blue surface, as if she were only part of a mimic scene, from

the pencil of some accomplished painter. Her broad cotton lateen-sails, as they hung drooping from the slanting and taper yards, shone with a glistening whiteness that contrasted beautifully with the dark flood in which they were reflected; and the distant sound of the guitar, which one of the sailors was listlessly playing on her deck, came sweetly over the water, and harmonized well with the quiet appearance of every thing around. The white-washed walls of the lazaretto, on a verdant headland at the mouth of the bay, glittered like silver in the slant rays of the sun; and some of its windows were burnished so brightly by the level beams, that it seemed as if the whole interior of the edifice were in flames. On the opposite side, the romantic and picturesque ruins of fort St. Philip, faintly seen, acquired double beauty from being tipped with the declining light; and the clusters of ancient-looking windmills, which dot the green eminences along the bank, added, by the motionless state of their wings, to the effect of the unbroken tranquillity.

Even on board our vessel, a degree of stillness unusual for a man-of-war prevailed among the crew. It was the hour of their evening meal; and the low murmur from the gun-deck had an indistinct and buzzing sound, which, like the dreamy hum of bees on a warm summer noon, rather heightened than diminished the charm of the surrounding quiet. The spar-deck was almost deserted. The quarter-mas-

ter of the watch, with his spy-glass in his hand, and dressed in a frock and trowsers of snowy whiteness, stood aft upon the taffrel, erect and motionless as a statue, keeping the usual look-out. A group of some half dozen sailors had gathered together on the fo'castle, where they were supinely lying under the shade of the bulwarks; and here and there, upon the gun-slides along the gangway, sat three or four others—one, with his clothes-bag beside him, overhauling his simple wardrobe; another working a set of clues for some favourite officer's hammock; and a third engaged, perhaps, in carving his name in rude letters upon the handle of a jack-knife, or in knotting a lanyard with which to suspend it round his neck.

On the top of the boom-cover, in the full glare of the level sun, lay black Jake, the jig-maker of the ship, and a striking specimen of African peculiarities, in whose single person they were all strongly developed. His flat nose was dilated to unusual width, and his ebony cheeks fairly glistened with delight, as he looked up at the gambols of a large monkey, which, clinging to the main-stay, just above Jake's woolly head, was chattering and grinning back at the negro, as if there existed some means of mutual intelligence between them. It was my watch on deck, and I stood awhile leaning on the main fife-rail and amusing myself by observing the antics of the black and his congenial playmate; but

at length, tiring of the rude mirth, I walked towards the taffrel, to gaze on the more agreeable features of the scene I have attempted to describe. Just at that moment a shout and a merry laugh burst upon my ear, and looking quickly round to ascertain the cause of the unusual sound on a frigate's deck, I saw little Bob Stay (as we called our commodore's son) standing half way up the main-hatch ladder, clapping his hands, and looking aloft at some object which seemed to inspire him with a deal of glee. A single glance to the main-yard informed me of the occasion of his merriment. He had been coming up from the gun-deck, when Jacko, perceiving him on the ladder, dropped suddenly down from the main-stay, and running along the boom-cover, leaped upon Bob's shoulder, seized his cap from his head, and immediately darted up the main-topsail-sheet, and thence to the bunt of the mainyard, where he now sat, picking threads from the tassel of his prize, and occasionally scratching his side, and chattering, as if with exultation at the success of his mischief. But Bob was a sprightly, active little fellow; and though he could not climb quite as nimbly as a monkey, yet he had no mind to lose his cap without an effort to regain it. Perhaps he was the more strongly incited to make chase after Jacko, by seeing me smile at his plight, or by the loud laugh of Jake, who seemed inexpressibly delighted at the occurrence, and endeavoured to evince, by

tumbling about the boom-cloth, shaking his huge misshapen head, and sundry other grotesque actions, the pleasure for which he had no words.

"Ha, you damn rascal, Jocko, hab you no more respec' for de young officer, den to steal his cab? We bring you to de gangway, you black nigger, and gib you a dozen on de bare back for a tief."

The monkey looked down from his perch as if he understood the threat of the negro, and chattered a sort of defiance in answer.

"Ha, ha! Massa Stay, he say you mus' ketch him 'fore you flog him; and it's no so easy for a midshipman in boots to ketch a monkey barefoot."

A red spot mounted to little Bob's cheek, as he cast one glance of offended pride at Jake, and then sprang across the deck to the Jacob's ladder. In an instant he was half-way up the rigging, running over the ratlines as lightly as if they were an easy flight of stairs, whilst the shrouds scarcely quivered beneath his elastic motion. In a second more his hand was on the futtocks.

"Massa Stay!" cried Jake, who sometimes, being a favourite, ventured to take liberties with the younger officers. "Massa Stay, you best crawl through de lubber's hole—it take a sailor to climb de futtock shroud."

But he had scarcely time to utter his pretended caution, before Bob was in the top. The monkey in the mean while had awaited his approach, until he

got nearly up the rigging, when it suddenly put the cap on its own head, and running along the yard to the opposite side of the top, sprang up a rope, and thence to the topmast backstay, up which it ran to the topmast cross-trees, where it again quietly seated itself, and resumed its work of picking the tassel to pieces. For several minutes I stood watching my little messmate follow Jacko from one piece of rigging to another, the monkey, all the while, seeming to exert only so much agility as was necessary to elude the pursuer, and pausing whenever the latter appeared to be growing weary of the chase. At last, by this kind of manœuvring, the mischievous animal succeeded in enticing Bob as high as the royal-mast-head, when, springing suddenly on the royal stay, it ran nimbly down to the fore-to'gallant-mast-head, thence down the rigging to the foretop, and leaping on the foreyard, it ran out to the yard-arm, hung the cap on the end of the studding-sail boom, and there taking its seat, it raised a loud and exulting chattering. Bob by this time was completely tired out, and, unwilling, perhaps, to return to the deck to be laughed at for his fruitless chase, he sat down in the royal cross-trees, while those who had been attracted by the sport, returned to their usual avocations or amusements. The monkey, no longer the object of pursuit or attention, remained but a little while on toe yard-arm; but soon taking up the cap, returned in towards the slings, and dropped it down upon the deck.

Some little piece of duty occurred at this moment to engage me for a few moments and as soon as it was performed I walked aft, and leaning my elbow on the taffrel, gave myself up to the recollection of scenes very different from the boyish pantomime I had just been witnessing. Soothed by the low hum of the crew, and by the quiet loveliness of every thing around, my thoughts had travelled far away from the realities of my situation, when I was suddenly startled by a cry from Black Jake, which brought me on the instant back to consciousness.

"My God! Massa Scupper," cried he, "Massa Stay is on de main-truck!"

A cold shudder ran through my veins at the word. I cast my eyes up—it was too true! The adventurous boy, after resting on the royal cross-trees, had been seized with a wish to go still higher, and moved by one of those impulses which sometimes instigate men to place themselves in situations of imminent peril, where no good can result from the exposure, he had climbed the skysail-pole, and, at the moment of my looking up, was actually standing on the main-truck! a small circular piece of wood on the very summit of the loftiest mast, and at a height so great from the deck that my brain turned dizzy as I looked up at him. The reverse of Virgil's line was true in this instance. It was comparatively easy to ascend—but to descend—my head swam round, and my stomach felt sick, at the

thought of the perils comprised in that one word. There was nothing above him or around him but the empty air—and beneath him, nothing but a point, a mere point—a small, unstable wheel, that seemed no bigger from the deck than the button on the end of a foil, and the taper skysail-pole itself scarcely larger than the blade. Dreadful temerity! If he should attempt to stoop, what could he take hold of to steady his descent? His feet quite covered up the small and fearful platform which he stood upon, and beneath that, a long, smooth, naked spar, which seemed to bend with his weight, was all that upheld him from destruction. An attempt to get down from "that bad eminence," would be almost certain death; he would inevitably lose his equilibrium, and be precipitated to the deck a crushed and shapeless mass. Such were the thoughts that crowded through my mind as I first raised my eyes, and saw the terrible truth of Jake's exclamation. What was to be done in the pressing and fearful exigency? To hail him, and inform him of the danger, would be but to insure his ruin. Indeed, I fancied that the rash boy already perceived the imminence of his peril; and I half thought I could see his limbs begin to quiver, and his cheek turn deadly pale. Every moment I expected to see the dreadful catastrophe. I could not bear to look at him, and yet could not withdraw my gaze. A film came over my eyes, and a faintness over my heart. The atmosphere seemed to

grow thick and tremble and waver like the heated air round a furnace; the mast appeared to totter, and the ship to pass from under my feet. I myself had the sensations of one about to fall from a great height, and in a sudden effort to recover myself, like that of a dreamer who fancies he is shoved from a precipice, I staggered up against the bulwarks.

When my eyes were once turned from the object to which they had been riveted, my sense and consciousness came back. I looked around—the deck was already crowded with people. The intelligence of poor Bob's temerity had spread through the ship like wild-fire—and the officers and crew were all crowding to the deck. Every one, as he looked up, turned pale, and his eye became fastened on the truck—like that of a spectator of an execution on the gallows—with a steadfast and unblinking, yet abhorrent gaze, as if momently expecting a fatal termination to the suspense. No one made a suggestion—no one spoke. Every feeling, every faculty seemed absorbed and swallowed up in one deep, intense emotion of agony. Once the first lieutenant seized the trumpet, as if to hail poor Bob, but he had scarce raised it to his lips, when his arm dropped again, and sunk listlessly down beside him, as if from sad consciousness of the inutility of what he had been going to say. Every soul in the ship was now on the spar-deck, and every eye was fixed on the main-truck.

At this moment there was a stir among the crew about the gangway, and directly after another face was added to those on the quarter-deck—it was that of the commodore, Bob's father. He had come alongside in a shore boat, without having been noticed by a single eye, so intense and universal was the interest that had fastened every gaze upon the spot where poor Bob stood trembling on the awful verge of fate. The commodore asked not a question, uttered not a syllable. He was a dark-faced, austere man, and it was thought by some of the midshipmen that he entertained but little affection for his son. However that might have been, it was certain that he treated him with precisely the same strict discipline that he maintained towards the other young officers, or if there was any difference at all, it was not in favour of Bob. Some, who pretended to have studied his character closely, affirmed that he loved his boy too well to spoil him, and that, intending him for the arduous profession in which he had himself risen to fame and eminence, he thought it would be of service to him to experience some of its privations and hardships at the outset.

The arrival of the commodore changed the direction of several eyes, which turned on him, to trace what emotions the danger of his son would occasion. But their scrutiny was foiled. By no outward sign did he show what was passing within. His eye still

retained its severe expression, his brow the slight frown which it usually wore, and his lip its haughty curl. Immediately on reaching the deck, he had ordered a marine to hand him a musket, and with this stepping aft, and getting on the lookout-block, he raised it to his shoulder, and took a deliberate aim at his son, at the same time hailing him, without a trumpet, in his voice of thunder.

"Robert! cried he, "jump! jump overboard! or I'll fire at you."

The boy seemed to hesitate, and it was plain that he was tottering, for his arms were thrown out like those of one scarcely able to retain his balance. The commodore raised his voice again, and in a quicker and more energetic tone, cried,

"Jump! 'tis your only chance for life."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth, before the body was seen to leave the truck and spring out into the air. A sound, between a shriek and groan, burst from many lips. The father spoke not—sighed not—indeed he did not seem to breathe. For a moment of intense interest a pin might have been heard to drop on deck. With a rush like that of a cannon ball, the body descended to the water, and before the waves closed over it, twenty stout fellows, among them several officers, had dived from the bulwarks. Another short period of anxious suspense ensued. He rose—he was alive! his arms were seen to move!—he struck out towards the

ship!—and despite the discipline of a man-of-war, three loud huzzas, an outburst of unfeigned and unrestrainable joy from the hearts of our crew of five hundred men, pealed through the air, and made the welkin ring.

Till this moment, the old commodore had stood unmoved. The eyes, that glistening with joy, now sought his face, saw that it was ashy pale. He attempted to descend the lookout-block, but his knees bent under him; he seemed to gasp for breath, and put up his hand, as if to tear open his vest; but before he accomplished his object, he staggered forward, and would have fallen on the deck, had he not been caught by old Black Jake. He was borne into his cabin, where the surgeon attended him, whose utmost skill was required to restore his mind to its usual equability and self-command, in which he at last happily succeeded. As soon as he recovered from the dreadful shock, he sent for Bob, and had a long confidential conference with him; and it was noticed when the little fellow left the cabin that he was in tears.

The next day we sent down our taunt and dashy poles, and replaced them with the stump-to'gallant-masts; and on the third, we weighed anchor, and made sail for Gibraltar.

FIRE AND WATER.

FIRE AND WATER.

I am beset and stunned,
And every sense bewildered. Violent men!
If ye unto this fearful pitch are bent—
When such necessity is pressed upon me,
What doth avail resistance?

Joanna Baillie.

A GUSTY September day was drawing to a close; and the prospect from the little cabin on the sea-coast, where our story opens, was unusually bleak for the season. The house was situated in a nook, at the foot of a range of high hills, which bounded the view on three sides, while on the fourth nothing met the eye but the monotonous ocean, for ever rolling its surges to the shore. The hills, behind the cabin, were sandy and barren, and afforded scanty nourishment to the dwarf pines and cedars which clothed their ridgy sides. Whatever soil of a more fertile kind once covered them, had been washed by many a storm to the area below, which was enclosed and cultivated as a vegetable garden,

and yielded hardly enough to pay the labourer for his toil.

The day in question was blustering and cold, and contrasted strongly with the previous one, when not a breath of wind had mitigated the fervour of the sun, which glared on the burning waters and sparkling sands, till the air quivered like the atmosphere of a furnace, and objects seen through it had a vibratory and dazzling appearance. But with that suddenness of change so frequent in our climate, this sultry day was succeeded by one uncomfortably cold, and a person might almost fancy he had passed in a night from September to January, or from the torrid to the frigid zone. A dense volume of smoke poured from the chimney of the little cabin, and diffusing itself over the hill in the rear, added to the indistinctness of the dusky landscape. The ocean was roughened by billows, which, at a distance, leaped and tumbled in multitudinous confusion, and as they approached the shore, extended into long curling ridges, which rolled up and broke upon the beach, with a sullen and melancholy roar. The sky was overcast, and a driving scud floated so low that it seemed to touch the summit of the hills as it hurried by. As night approached, the wind grew more chilly, and it had that damp and clammy feeling which characterizes our easterly storms.

At some distance to the left of the cabin, a group of seamen sat on the beach, under the lee of a spur

or projection of one of the hills. At anchor, opposite to them, just beyond the break of the surf, lay a small schooner, the size and model of which, her taunt, raking masts, sharp bows, and general trig appearance, showed she was one of those fine sea-boats, in which our hardy pilots cruise off for weeks together, and brave all the vicissitudes and perils of the sea. She lay rolling and heaving in the swell with an easy motion, and floated on the surface, as light and buoyant as a cork. A small boat, painted in the same fashion with the schooner, was hauled up and turned bottom upwards on the beach, furnishing a rest against which some of the men carelessly leaned, while others trimmed a fire, the smoke of which rolled up from the midst of the circle.

"We shall have a gale to-night," said one of them, as he eyed the weather, and held the back of his skinny hand to the wind, with the knowing air of an experienced seaman; "it will blow great guns before morning."

"Yes, and I'm thinking," said another, turning his eyes seaward, "that yonder black privateer-looking craft in the offing had better stand out for sea-room, instead of backing and filling round here, like a cooper round a water-cask. If she don't mind her weather helm, she'll be slap ashore before she's much older."

"She's a regular built beauty, any how," observed a third. "She's as trim as a lady, and sets the water like a duck. She stays like a top, too, and lays dead up in the wind's eye. Now, do but mind her spring her luff."

"She's a suspicious craft, though; damn my chain-plates, if she is'nt," said the speaker, who was a rough, red-faced man, somewhat stricken in years, with small gray eyes, that twinkled deep in their sockets, and a mouth like a mackerel's; "I hauled my wind, and ran under her counter; but she didn't want a pilot—no, not she!—and didn't even tip me a thank'e for my pains."

"What thundering short tacks she makes!" said another of the group. "There, she's heaving about again. Ay, that's the way to rub her copper bright, and keep all hands busy, like the devil in a gale of wind."

"They'll have business enough on their hands, if old Chase gets the word I sent up," replied the elderly man. "If the cutter only runs down to take a look at that brig, she'll bring her to in short order, and make her sing small."

"Here's a hullabaloo!" said the one who had before spoken of the beauty of the craft, which furnished the theme of conversation. "Can't a vessel lie off-and-on for a day or two, waiting, perhaps, for some word from her owner or consignee, without being suspected as a pirate?"

"Pirate or no pirate, you mind my words," said the old man; "if the cutter comes down, yonder black and rakish-looking chap will be off like a shot off a shovel."

"I wish the honest fellows aboard of her could hear your palaver, Bill Sneering; if they wouldn't clew up your jaw-tacks, I'm mistaken. They'd show you their papers, and you mightn't find it easy to read them, either."

"Honest fellows, do you say?—honest devils! A set of piratical rogues, I'll engage, with fingers like fish-hooks, that hold all they touch. And see, yonder's the fellow that has been staying at Jim Fisher's cabin these three days past—just the time that the queer-looking craft has been dodging about. I shouldn't wonder if he had something to do with her."

"Small helm, Bill, small helm! What's the use of yawing about in that style? There's no telling which way you'll drive next. What has the young man done, that you must let fly a shot at him?"

"What? Why what is he doing here, alone, and without any acknowledged business? Why does he bear away when any one sheers alongside of him, as if he was afraid to show the cut of his jib? And why does he keep such a bright lookout for that brig from morning to night, tacking when she tacks, and watching all her motions, as close as a shark does a Guinea ship? I tell you what, that

'mawphrodite yonder is either a smuggler or pirate, and that young fellow has more to do with her than he cares to have known."

"Come, side out for a bend!" said one of the group, rising to his feet. "Avast, Bill Sneering, and take a turn o' that. Come, lads, let's freshen the nip all round, and then be off. It is time we were under way."

So saying, he drew from underneath the boat a bottle and tin cup, poured out a draught, and tossed it off. As he finished, he drew a long breath, and attested the excellence of the beverage with a hearty smack. The others either did not understand the meaning of this eulogium, or were not disposed to trust their comrade's evidence. Every man chose to judge for himself, and that the decision might rest on a proper foundation, they gave the matter a full trial, each helping himself to such a portion of the contents of the bottle as might leave no doubt as to its quality. This grave business duly despatched, they turned their boat upon its keel, ran it into the surf, and returned to their little schooner, the white canvass of which soon glanced at a distance, like a sea-bird on the edge of the horizon.

In the mean while, the individual who had been, in part, the subject of conversation among these pilots, continued to walk along the beach, pausing now and then to gaze seaward over the wide waste

of billows, which tossed their foaming crests about, like a turbaned host in all the confusion of slaughterous fight. He was a pale young man, of a slender figure, and rather above the middle size. His hazel eyes lighted a countenance the cast of which was melancholy and contemplative. His mouth had a mingled expression of sweetness and irascibility; the one, probably, the effect of natural temper, and the other of ill health. His brown hair clustered thickly round a high and pallid brow, on which the lines of anxious thought were imprinted.

The vessel to which he occasionally turned his gaze was such a craft as a seaman's eye delights to look upon. Her long and graceful hull, of unmingled-blackness, was formed on the best model of marine symmetry; and her spars ascended to a height which, to an unpractised observer, might seem to threaten continual danger. She was of that description of vessels which combine the character of brig and schooner. Forward, she was a brig; and her sails, gradually decreasing as they rose one above another, dwindled at last almost to a point, and presented an appearance like the surface of a pyramid. Abaft, her mast was formed of one long taper spar, (a noble stick!) which raked so far over that it seemed in danger of falling, and yet supported a sail of such extent that it might have furnished a main-course for a frigate of the largest class.

The motions of this vessel had in truth something

in them well calculated to attract attention. At one time, with her yards braced sharp to the wind, she would stretch far out to sea, until the proportions of her figure were lost in the cloudy atmosphere, and she appeared but as a speck on the verge of the ocean. Then squaring away before the breeze, she would thrash along at a furious rate towards the shore, nor haul her wind, until she seemed on the very point of plunging among the breakers. Her yards would then swing round, as if by magic, and in a moment, with every sail braced up, she would again plough her seaward course, her taper spars bending like wands under their pressure, and her keel leaving behind a broad track of snow-white foam to attest the velocity of her motion.

The manœuvres of this vessel strongly attracted the attention of the young man on the beach. It might have been that the abstract beauty of the spectacle won his admiration; for surely there are few objects of more true grace and majesty, or that are connected with more interesting associations, than a stately and well managed bark, defying the turbulence of the ocean, and compelling even the adverse gale to speed her on her way. Or the interest with which he viewed her might have been because there was nothing else on which his eyes could repose with pleasure. The hills behind were rough and steril; and looked dark and gloomy

through the heavy air; the shore was sandy and uncultivated, save one little plot; and the sea, in all its wide extent, except that solitary bark, presented nothing to his view but a desolate prospect of black and tumbling waves—deep calling unto deep with a wild and melancholy sound.

Even the one object of interest which his eye dwelt upon, soon faded from sight. The graceful movements of the vessel grew indistinct—her neat proportions were swallowed up in the increasing dusk of evening, and the stranger at length turned and pursued his way to the little cabin.

It was a low-browed building, of rude exterior. Its sides and roof were blackened by many an easterly storm, the dampness of which had also caused them to be overgrown with moss. Implements stood about, which denoted the occupation of the inhabitant. A net was stretched on poles to dry; a skiff lay bottom upwards near the house; a rake, such as are used in taking oysters, leaned against the eaves; and various rods and other kinds of fishing-tackle were scattered round. Within, however, the aspect of things was more cheery. The furniture was of the simplest sort, and every thing was humble; but the greatest neatness pervaded the cottage, giving to it that air of true comfort which without neatness can never exist, and showing that the part under female superintendence, at least, was properly conducted. And thus it always is. There

is no condition of which woman is not the better angel. How poor an abiding place this world would be, were her care withdrawn! Man may manage the business of existence, but its elegances are her handiwork. He may throw her off in the hours of strife and tumult; but how few would be his intervals of peace and repose, without her smile to enliven his hearth, and her hand to smooth his pillow! The other ingredients in the cup of life he may mingle himself, but she drops into it its balm.

Soon after reaching the cabin, the stranger joined the fisher and his family at their simple repast, of which he partook with an appetite he had earned by his walk. He then retired to his own apartment, and drawing a little table to the fire, threw fresh fuel on the expiring flames, and sat down before them. The wind moaned dismally round the corners of the house, and the roar of the ocean swelled the mournful wail. These sounds, perhaps, gave the tone to his thoughts, the shadows of which mounted to his face, and betrayed their nature. He leaned his head on his hand, and his contracted brow and compressed lip showed he was revolving painful subjects. Once or twice, as the casements jarred, or the wind swept in an abrupt and louder gust, he started from his chair; but becoming aware of the nature of the noise, he sank down again, with a glow on his pale cheek, as if ashamed of his nervous trepidation. A vessel of water, and another con-

taining some fluid of a different kind, stood on the table; and the stranger at length turned, and with a precipitate and flurried action, as if determined to dispel his unpleasant meditations, poured a draught from these, which he hastily drank. He then threw himself back in his chair, and closed his eyes, and his countenance wore the constrained look of one who endeavours to force his mind into a new channel, against its natural tendency. It is not for us to unveil the young man's thoughts, and show his naked heart. If the reader is charitable, causes enough for his uneasiness may be readily imagined, without resorting to any injurious to his character. If he is of a different disposition, a wider field is before him.

The stranger's musings at length took a more agreeable turn. His brow relaxed, his lip curved into a smile, and his breath came in easier respirations from a bosom that no longer heaved with painful emotions. But in the midst of his more pleasant thoughts, the shrill sound of a whistle interrupted their current. A window of his apartment opened towards the ocean, and he turned to see whence the sound proceeded. He perceived that the moon had struggled through the rack of clouds, and was shedding a dim twilight upon the earth. By this light he saw the brigatine, which all day had been lurking on the coast, now again standing towards the shore. He knew it was the same vessel, though

her well-modelled form was but imperfectly shown in the feeble illumination. She ran boldly towards the land, and approached so near the beach that the stranger deemed she must inevitably ground; but she suddenly rounded to, and her foretopsail was hauled so as to present its forward surface to the wind, which had the effect to keep her stationary. A boat was then lowered from her stern, and brought to at her gangway, and three dimly seen figures descended into it, and pulled stoutly to land. The boat flew through the water with great velocity, and as she drew nearer, her crew became more distinctly visible. While two of them stretched to the oars, the third stood at the helm and guided her course. He seemed a tall, strong man, rudely dressed, and a leathern girdle buckled round his waist, sustained a cutlass and a brace of pistols. Before the keel grated on the sand, he sprang to land, and strided towards the cottage. He was followed by one of the men, while the other remained to guard the boat. The young stranger, who was watching their movements, here lost sight of them for a moment—the next, they stood within his apartment.

"Ha! have I found you at last?" said the leader, in a low but energetic tone. "I have sought you far and near—but now you are mine!" His olive complexion grew darker, and his black eyes glittered as he spoke. "It is well you are up and ready; I had otherwise dragged you from your bed."

The young man sunk trembling and shuddering to his feet.

"No cowering, wretch?" resumed the other; "you have played the woman long enough; be a man now, and meet boldly the fate which cannot be averted."

The young man rose to his feet, as if about to rush from the room; but the grasp of his foe tightened on his shoulder, and he sunk again into his chair. He then thought he might alarm the house; but the hand of his enemy was pressed upon his mouth, while a pistol, which he drew and cocked with the other, was pointed to his head.

"Speak one word," said he, "utter one sound, or make one effort to escape, and you die on the instant." He uttered this in a tone scarcely above a whisper, and hoarse with rage. "Come, follow me," he added; "I have no time to waste on such a wretch. Remember! one faltering step, a whisper, or a glance aside, and a bullet whistles through your head."

The young man rose, like one under the influence of a spell, and followed his dark foeman, as he passed with noiseless stride out of the house. He was himself followed by the attendant, who, like his superior, held a cocked pistol, ready to fire on the first doubtful sound or motion. They reached the boat, the prisoner was thrust into it, and it was shoved off. A dozen strokes of the oars set them

alongside the brigatine. They mounted to her deck, the boat was dropped and run up, and the vessel filled away. All this was done in profound silence. The prisoner was now permitted to move about the deck uncontrolled; but the keen eyes of his stern enemy, as he stood near the helm, and directed the course of the vessel and the motions of the crew by signs, were riveted on his victim.

The brig stood out to sea and cut through the water at a rapid rate. The cabin of the fisherman on the shore was already undistinguishable from the dark back-ground of hills, and these also had lost their distinctness of outline, and were fast vanishing in the gloom. A cry of "sail oh!" from aloft first broke the silence. It was not necessary to follow this announcement with the usual questions. The vessel reported rushed into plain sight as she opened a point of land that had concealed her. As the eye of the commander of the brigatine rested on her, a tremour shook his frame. For a moment he stood studying her through his glass; then dashing it on deck, he addressed rapid orders to his crew. All hands were immediately busied in making sail and working ship. Though the wind whistled wildly through the cordage, a ringtail was added to the mainsail, and every sail that would draw was set. It was soon evident that the strange vessel was chasing the brigatine, and it became necessary that all hands should assist in working the latter, to

which end the lookouts were called from forward and aloft.

"Here! let this trembling wretch go on the fore-topsail-yard," cried the commander. "He can report if any other sail heaves in sight, or at any rate he will there be out of the way. What, coward! do you shrink? Nay, then, by heaven! you shall go. Here, Tom, take this pistol, and follow him up the rigging. If he refuses or falters, shoot him dead."

The poor object of this persecution shuddered, and cold drops of sweat bedewed his forehead; but opposition would have been worse than useless, and in the hope that some turn might yet release him from his dreadful thraldom, he began to climb the shrouds. He trembled so violently, that this would not have been an easy task had the brig been lying at rest; but she was now pitching and rolling heavily, and it seemed to him, as he was swept to and fro through the air, that the next motion would inevitably hurl him into the sea. At last, however, he reached the topsail-yard, and attempted to seat himself on the dizzy perch. But he looked down and saw the waves whirling and boiling below, while the narrow and unsteady vessel seemed to glide away from beneath him, and the mast to fall over of its own weight. His head grew giddy; a deadly sickness came over his fainting soul, and he would have pitched head foremost to the deck, had

he not been upheld by the strong arm of the man who ascended with him. An expression of sympathy struggled to his hard face, and seeing that the prisoner, if left to himself, would soon lose his hold and be dashed to pieces, he fastened him to the topmast by passing a bunt-gasket strongly round his body.

The strange vessel in the mean time was fast overhauling the brigatine. In vain the latter crowded sail. It but buried her deeper in the sea, without increasing her speed. She next attempted to weather on the pursuer, and braced every thing as sharp up as it could be hauled; but the stranger lay as close to the wind as the chase, and that expedient was also vain. The brig tried the pursuer's sailing on all tacks, in hope to find her weak on some point, and thus obtain an advantage. She squared away, she braced first on one tack, and then on the other; she tried her with the wind on the bow, abeam, on the quarter, every way—and every way the stranger outsailed her. The gale was now blowing a piping note, and the scud, dispersed before it, allowed the moon to shine down between the higher clouds. The commander of the brigatine called his crew aft, and addressed a few earnest words to them. The conference lasted but an instant, when the men were seen hurrying forward, and directly after issued from the caboose, each bearing a blazing fagot in his hand. With

these they set fire to the vessel in various places; then lashed the helm, lowered a boat from the lee quarter, where their motions could not be seen by the vessel in chase, and jumping into it, pulled under cover of their own brig towards the shore.

The fire soon caught the dry and pitchy deck and light bulwarks, and spread with fearful rapidity. The unhappy young man on the yard looked down on the scene without the power to release himself from his dreadful place of captivity. Even could he have loosened the knot which bound him there, and which was but drawn the tighter the more he struggled, his situation would have been little improved. The deck was already a sea of fire. It had caught the sails, and towered up in a pyramid far above his head. He writhed in agony and strove to shriek, but it seemed as if the flames which roared around him had scorched his throat and deprived him of the power of utterance. He felt his flesh shrivel and crack in the intense heat, and his garments, as he moved, chafed the skin from his body. The sails, however, were quickly consumed or blown off in blazing fragments into the sea; but the wind, which then visited his cheek brought no relief, but added tenfold anguish to his blistered flesh. He turned his seared eyeballs towards the shore, and they fell on the boat, midway, the inmates of which were rendered visible, and their savage features shown with horrible distinctness, in

the glare of the burning vessel. His foe, towering above the rest, stood in the after part, and his face was turned with an expression of fiendish joy, as it seemed, towards his writhing victim, whose agonized motions he could perhaps discern in the hellish light.

From this maddening sight the tortured wretch turned towards the pursuing vessel—but she had descried the boat and changed her course! All hope of rescue now died within him. The flames were fast eating into the mast at the deck, and streaming up the dry and greasy spar with appaling fierceness, while their roar and crackling sounded to his frenzied ear like the exultation of infernal spirits waiting for their prey. The shrouds, too, were on fire, and the pitch that boiled out from them added to the fury of the conflagration. The victim saw that his fate was near at hand, and ceased to struggle. Again the heat came up with scorching power, and a thick pitchy cloud of smoke wrapt him for a moment in its suffocating folds. It passed away and he could see again. The shrouds were quite consumed, save a few blazing ends, which waved round him like the whips of furies; and the flames, which had lingered for a moment round the thick body of rigging at the mast head, were now climbing the topmast, and had almost reached the spot where he was bound. At this moment the brig rolled to windward, and he felt the mast

tremble and totter like a falling tree. She slowly righted and lurched to leeward. The mast cracked and snapped—he felt his body rush through the air—the spar fell hissing into the ocean—the cold water closed over his scorched and shuddering body —he threw out his arms and made one more frantic effort to release himself—the knot that bound him suddenly gave way—and——But we will let him tell the result in his own words.

On the following morning, the young man was seated in the same apartment of the fisherman's cabin, to which we have already introduced the reader. Writing materials were before him, and his pen was busy in addressing a letter to a friend. We have an author's privilege of looking over his shoulder, and take the liberty to transcribe the following passage of his epistle:

THE LETTER.

"I shall return to town immediately, for I do not find the sea-air is of any advantage to my health; and this sudden change of weather will render the hot streets of the city endurable, while here I am actually shivering with cold. My malady is not one, my dear friend, which sea-air or change of climate can remove. It is seated—not in the body, but in the mind—and wherever I go I meet with something to remind me of my loss. Even

the simple but kind wife of the humble fisherman with whom I lodge, does or says something twenty times a-day to make me feel what I have suffered in the untimely death of my poor Eliza. No matter, I shall soon follow her.

* * * * *

"The limits of a letter will not allow me to tell you of a strange adventure I had last night. I was both burned to death and drowned; but the particulars of this sad accident I must reserve for our meeting. You will conjecture that this happened in a dream—and it was the wildest dream that the fancy of a sleeper ever framed. It is curious how much real torture, and for how long a time, one may experience in a half hour's slumber. I have a very vivid idea, now, of what the martyrs must have suffered, and am amazed at their fortitude. My dream was suggested, probably, by a conversation among some sailors, which the wind wafted to my ears, though it was not intended for them. You will smile when I tell you out of what slender materials my sleeping and feverish brain created a conflagration and an ocean. When I waked, in all the horror of a double death by fire and water, I found that in my slumber I had overthrown a pitcher into my lap, and

that my feet were toasting something too close to a fire, which had blazed up after I fell asleep. I ought to mention that I had taken a rather larger draught than usual of my opiate mixture. Of such shreds dreams are made!

BROUGHT TO THE GANGWAY.

BROUGHT TO THE GANGWAY.

'Tis fearful, on the broad-back'd waves,
To feel them shake, and hear them roar—
Beneath, unsounded, dreadful caves;
Around, no cheerful shore.
Yet, midst this solemn world, what deeds are done!

Dana.

"SEVEN bells, quartermaster!" cried the sentry from the gun-deck.

The binnacle timepiece was out of repair, and the ship's time was kept, in the mean while, by a half-hourglass, under charge of the sentry at the cabin-door.

"It is seven bells, sir," said the quartermaster, reporting to the lieutenant of the watch.

"Make it so," replied the lieutenant, in a foggy voice; and, directly afterwards, seven loud strokes on the bell announced to all the ship that the first watch was nearly expired.

These were the first sounds which had interrupted the profound silence of the vessel since the bell was last struck, half an hour before. It was a delicious

tropical night. The full, round moon shone down from a sky, the perfect serenity of which was not disturbed by a single cloud; and its broad wake on the sea extended far away, like a path inviting to some "island of the blest." There was just breeze enough to fill the canvass and crisp the surface of the ocean. The billows swelled gently up into the moonlight, their ridges curling into playful ripples, which glittered for a moment and whirled away, to be succeeded by other shining undulations. The water was of the intensest blue, except where thus checkered by mazy streaks of brightness, or flecked with tuft-like spots of foam, which, here and there, some little wave, saucier than the rest, would fling from it, as in sport. The light streamed on the deck in so strong a flood, that it seemed transmuted into silver by the "heavenly alchymy;" while the shadows of the sails, spars, and rigging, lay so black and well-defined, that the ship had a strange appearance, as if formed of opposite materials, joined in grotesque mosaic. The sails were swelled steadily out by the breeze, and the moonbeams slept in their snowy laps so softly, that they seemed rather to gleam with inherent light, than absorb the lustre of the planet. The signal-halliards were as white and glistening as cords of glossy silk; and the running-rigging, and even the tarred shrouds and backstays, were touched with a thin edge of radiance, like bars of some hard and polished substance.

The ship crept gently and steadily forward, and the slight line of foam which she left sparkled with the brilliancy of frostwork. She was a gallant frigate, and glided on her course under a full spread of canvass. The wind was on her starboard-quarter; and on every mast wide volumes of sails were extended, which rose tapering, one above another, in airy swells, till the loftiest, dwindled almost to a point, looked like a little fleecy cloud. So even and placid was her motion, that she seemed at perfect rest; and her progress was only betrayed by the bank of foam round her bows, and the whitened eddies in her wake. The silence on board was scarcely broken by the low wash of the sea against her sides, which had an indistinct and lulling sound, that harmonized with the faint-heard respiration of the sleeping crew, and heightened the effect of the pervading quiet. Her upper-deck seemed almost deserted. The watch, for the most part, lay hid in the shade of the bulwarks; and such as remained at their posts, preserved a stillness in keeping with the scene. The men at the wheel, on whose white dresses the moonlight streamed, looked like figures carved in marble; while those who stood in shadow resembled statues of bronze.

Such was the state of things on board the frigate which furnishes the incidents of this story, when the silence was interrupted by the report of seven bells. The lieutenant of the watch straightened himself up,

cleared his voice, and hailed the look-outs through his trumpet.

"Keep a bright lookout there, forward!"

"Ay, ay, sir," was promptly answered from both catheads; and the same order, followed by the same reply, was repeated to all the stations.

"Four, two, sir;" said the master's-mate of the watch, who had been aft heaving the log, and now reported the ship's rate to the officer of the deck.

"Give her four knots, sir—her course the same;" and the master's-mate disappeared down the companion hatchway to make the entry on the log-slate.

The lieutenant roused himself, and descending from the lookout ladder, began to bustle about, as if to atone by activity in the last half hour of his watch, for the drowsiness he had indulged during the previous portion. He was one of a class of officers happily not numerous. A perfect sailor, so far as acquaintance with the practical details of his profession constitutes one, his knowledge embraced little else beyond mere external and frivolous accomplishments. He was supple and cringing to his superiors, but haughty and overbearing to those beneath him; and much of his time was past either in yielding superfluous deference to the one, or exacting servile respect from the other. His person was fashioned in a handsome mould, a circumstance of which he seemed fully aware. His rank, and

the high reputation of the navy at the period—(about the time of some of those brilliant victories which have conferred enduring fame on those who achieved them)—had given him access to a class in society to which his intrinsic qualities would scarcely have introduced him. These opportunities of refined intercourse he had not used in a way calculated to advance his reputation, or furnish very agreeable topics of solitary meditation. He was still in the prime of manhood, but his countenance bore strong traces of a dissolute course. Dissipation had anticipated the ravages of time; and the glass of the prematurely faded profligate must often have admonished him, that guilty pleasures, though they may shed a fleeting and false glare over life, invariably waste what they illumine. Unhappy the condition of that man whose follies are his epochs, and whose present pain is the only memento of former gratifications. Such was the case with Lieutenant Parral; and a part of his imperious deportment to those beneath him, might, perhaps, have resulted from that acerbity of temper which reflections on time squandered and powers misapplied naturally occasion.

"Mr. Marling," cried he, to a midshipman of the watch, who stood leaning against the capstan, on the lee-side of the deck, and whose mind seemed absorbed in a train of pleasant thoughts, suggested, probably, by the quiet beauty of the scene—"Mr.

Marling, you needn't trouble yourself to hold that capstan up, sir; it can stand without assistance. Here, jump into the weather gangway, and rouse up every scoundrel of the watch. What do the lubbers mean by sleeping at their stations? Here, who are you? rouse up here, sir!" continued he, addressing some one who reclined in the shade of the bulwarks between two of the after carronades, and accompanying the words with a smart thrust of his foot. "Get up, here, you scoundrel! get up! How dare you go to sleep in your watch?"

The figure that rose up at these words, and stepped out into the moonlight, was that of a young man who had little of the common sailor in his appearance, except the garb. He was tall and well shaped, and a mass of dark hair fell in unregulated locks over a forehead, the height and expansion of which gave a noble air to his countenance. The treatment he had just received might have kindled unwonted fire in his eyes, which were dark and brilliant, and rested full on the officer as he replied, in a mild, but firm tone.

"I was not asleep, sir, and should have obeyed your order, had it not heen seconded by your foot."

"How dare you make so insolent an answer? How dare you answer at all, sir!" demanded the lieutenant.

"I answered, because your question seemed to require reply. To have remained silent, might more justly have been considered insolent."

"I asked no question—I charged you with being asleep."

"And I replied that I was not."

"You lie, you scoundrel, you were? How dare you contradict me? Do you forget where you are?"

"Indeed I do not. I am too constantly and painfully reminded to admit of even a moment's forgetfulness. I denied your charge, sir, because it was unfounded. I stated but the simple truth in self-vindication—there is surely no great contumacy in that."

"So, so!" said the lieutenant, in a voice of suppressed passion, "a fine bird we have caught here! Will it please you, Mr. Self-vindication, to step forward as far as the main fife-rail? Mr. Marling, send the boatswain's-mate aft here. You shall be taught, my gentleman, the man-of-war definition of contumacy. You have your vocabulary to learn anew, and I will set you the first lesson myself."

"I trust, sir, you do not mean to inflict corporal punishment upon me?" said the young man, his eye glittering with meaning.

"I trust, sir, to remove that opinion; you labour under an erroneous impression—you do, upon my honour," said the lieutenant, in an ironical tone.

"Mr. Parral!" exclaimed the young man, "you surely will not violate the express rules of the navy. Those rules were framed for my protection as well as yours—they are designed to guard the rights of the subaltern as well as those of the superior. The commander alone has legal power to inflict stripes. If I have incurred such punishment, report me to him—there is little fear that he will turn a deaf ear to the complaint."

"Flog first, and report afterwards, is my rule," answered the lieutenant, in the same sneering tone. "It is a liberal rule, and leads to double payment. So, sir, strip off your jacket and receive the first instalment, by way of smart-money."

"I bid you beware, Mr. Parral, how you proceed to extremity," said the young man, in a constrained tone, but his voice quivered with emotion.

"So, so! worse and worse—from insolence to mutiny! A mere dislocation at first—now a compound fracture. Hurry along here, boatswain's-mate, and proceed to this young gentleman's extremity—come, sir, you had better step quicker, or you may chance to get a dose of your own medicine."

The boatswain's-mate approached, and drew forth his colt—as the rope's-end used in ordinary cases of punishment is called. He slowly uncoiled it, and straightened out its kinks; and then, taking one or two turns round his right hand, he stood holding the other end loosely in his left, in the manner practised

by those experienced in the use of that instrument. The young man stretched himself up to his full height, and watched these preparations as the eagle may be supposed to watch the advances of the mousing owl. His lip was compressed in a scornful curve, his brow contracted, and the orbs beneath seemed to glow with concentrated fire.

"Once more, Mr. Parral," said he, "I bid you beware! You may inflict this indignity upon me, for I have no means of resistance; but if you do, as there is a God in heaven, you shall rue the hour!"

The lieutenant marked the firm air of the young man, and it seemed not without its effect upon him. His cheek lost something of its colour; or it might have been that it only looked paler as he turned his face fuller into the moonlight.

"Rank mutiny, by hell!" muttered he between his teeth; and he took one or two hasty turns on the quarterdeck before he continued: "You may put up your colt, boatswain's-mate—this is a case that requires deeper surgery. Mr. Marling, send the master-at-arms on deck, and let him bring a set of double irons with him. I *will* report the scoundrel—he shall have his choice—I will report him with a vengeance! Here, boatswain's-mate, start this fellow into the brig; and do you attend, Mr. Marling, and see him securely ironed. I'll teach him to utter mutinous threats—I'll give him a lesson he'll not forget in a hurry, I warrant him!"

The young man's eyes rested on the officer a single instant as he turned to descend the main-hatch ladder; but that brief glance conveyed a volume of scornful matter. He then followed the boatswain's-mate to the gundeck, and walked unresistingly to the part of the ship allotted to the confinement of prisoners.

"You might better have taken a half dozen with the colt," whispered the boatswain's-mate, in a voice meant to express kindness, though its tone was not unlike the sob of an expiring north-wester. I would have laid it on light—I am up to that—and a little stiff grog would have set all up again. But them damn cats are ugly customers, and there is no such thing as coming the gammon with them.

"It is better as it is," said the prisoner; "a night in confinement may be easily endured; and in the morning, I trust the captain will listen to my statement."

"I'm afeared you'll miss stays, if that's your reckoning," said the sailor. "But, howsomever, it's no use palavering about it; so keep a stiff upper lip, brace taut up, and weather it out like a man, my lad."

While the boatswain's-mate was pouring his rough consolation into the prisoner's ear, Lieutenant Parral paced the quarter-deck in silence; meditating, probably, how he should shape his report to the commander, so as to secure the most exemplary

punishment to the young sailor. While thus occupied, the sentry reported eight bells; the relief watch was called; and for a few moments all was bustle on the quarter-deck. The men from below, roused from their brief sleep by the deep cries of the boatswain's-mates, swarmed up the ladders, each hurrying to answer to his name, as it was called by one of the youthful officers. Directly after, the clear, shrill pipe announced to those who had been on duty since eight o'clock, that they might now seek repose in their hammocks for four short hours, unless a change of weather should occur to abridge their rest. While this piece of duty was going forward, the lieutenant of the mid-watch arrived on deck, and Mr. Parral, passing the customary word to his relief, descended to his state-room.

When daylight dawned on the following morning, it found the prisoner sitting in a melancholy posture in the brig—as the place of confinement in a man-of-war is termed. In the vessel in question, this was between the two forward guns, on the starboard side of the gundeck, and immediately adjoining the space appropriated to the cooks; the litter of whose culinary preparations was profusely scattered around. The prisoner sat on the deck, heavily ironed; and a sentry, in the coarse fatigue dress of the marine service, walked to and fro before him. The wind had shifted during the night, and was now blowing fresh on the larboard-beam, which brought the place

of confinement on the lee-side, and caused it to be wet with the wash of the spray, that every now and then broke through a weather-port, and ran in streams to leeward. Every thing around, as seen in the dim and smoky light of dawn, had a cheerless and repulsive appearance. There was another person in the brig, a tough and weather-beaten seaman, confined for drunkenness, and he lay stretched along the deck in the torpor of death-like sleep. But "the balm of hurt minds" had failed to lull the senses of the younger prisoner, whose countenance bore evidence that the thoughts which banished slumber from his lids were of the most painful and agitating nature.

There was something in the appearance of this young person which distinguished him from his rude and uncultivated associates. It had been remarked that he had the free and open bearing of one not used to crouch before superiors, and that he expressed himself on all occasions with unstudied ease and propriety. A rumour prevailed among his shipmates that he belonged to a rank in life very different from that which he now occupied. Some ascribed his present situation to the disappointment of a romantic attachment; and others imputed it to a sudden impulse of youthful enthusiasm, kindled by the fame of those achievements on the ocean, which at that time had excited proud feelings in every bosom. Nothing of his history was certainly known,

however, more than that he had appeared on board the frigate on the eve of her departure; and had asked to be received as one of her crew. If indeed moved to that step by any such dreams of naval glory as some of his companions supposed, poor youth! the illusion had been of brief continuance, and was already effectually dispelled by the ignominy of his present situation.

As daylight increased, the ship's idlers began to move about the gun-deck. Does the reader know what description of person a ship's idler is? There never was a greater misnomer. He is any thing but an idler—he is the busiest man on board—he is an idler only in name, and must derive the appellation from the rule of contraries. The steerage mess-boy, for example, is an idler: his duty is merely to wait upon some dozen midshipmen, supply all their wants, attend to all their caprices, cook their meals, clean their dishes, keep the steerage in order, and obey twenty contradictory commands in the same moment. "Bring me such a thing from the galley," says one; "Carry this into the cockpit," cries a second; "Jump on deck with my message," bawls a third; "Stay here and wait on me," roars a fourth; and so on through the whole category. And because, to all these impossible duties, that of keeping a regular night-watch is not added, he is termed an idler. A ship's idler, if he had as many eyes as Argus, and as many hands as Briareus,

would find employment for them all. But this is digression.

The idlers began to move about the deck; and two of that privileged class, who officiated as cooks to different messes of officers, met together at the galley, to commence their diurnal avocations. These worthies were of that race upon which the sun of Africa has bestowed a complexion that defies injury from the exposures of a seafaring life. One of them, however, seemed to have experienced its ardour in a mitigated degree, and was only browned to a dingy yellow; while the other had been burned coal-black by its fiercer influence. As striking a difference pervaded their whole appearance. The saffron official was tall and slender, with a little body perched on legs like those of a pair of tongs, and surmounted by a knob-like head, as round as a bullet. His sable companion was short and thick set, with legs of that shape, that if he had been Collossus and bestrid the world, his feet would have met beneath it. His head was a large woolly excresence, not unlike the same member in a monkey; and it was set between shoulders that seemed to have been seized with an ambition to rise as high in the world as itself, in which at times they appeared to succeed, for he had the faculty of drawing the latter in like a turtle. The jet hue of his countenance was in strong contrast with the ivory whiteness two huge rows of teeth, which stood out from his

jaw as if eager to show themselves; while his lips, though abundantly large enough to cover them, curled over in blubbered volumes, as if unwilling to hide the lustre of the obtrusive masticators.

"Ki! Grummet, only look dere!" ejaculated the figure of bronze to his copper companion, as his dilated and "white-upturned, wondering eyes" rested on the new inmate of the brig. "Bless my heart! if dey haven't got Maurice Seaward in de brig!"

"What's dat you say, Toggle?" demanded the other, who was kneeling at the galley, and kindling a fire in its grate; "Maurice Seaward! Why, so it is! Now what can that be for! He aint been athwart any one's hawse, I know. And see, Toggle, dey've put de armourer's ruffles on him, too!"

"By golly!" responded Toggle, "a marlingspike to a belaying pin, dat's some of Mr. Parral's work: he's always had a grudge agin that lad, because he can talk as high dic as himself; and he rides him down like a maintack. I don't mind seeing an old salt, like Jack Girtline there, in the brig, because he's manured to it; and would rather take a dozen any day, than have a stopper clapt on his grog. But a young chap like Maurice, that always keeps himself square by the lifts and braces—it's a regular built shame!"

"And a better man than the one that put him there too, if the truth was known," added Grummet,

in a low, grumbling voice. "I'll tell you what, Toggle, a settling day will come for all these things, and den see if Mr. Parral will hab courage to stan' by all he's done."

"He hab courage!" said Toggle, with an expression of great scorn, "pewter courage, I guess."

"What you mean by pewter courage?"

"Why what melt and run at de first fire. He is brave enough when there's no danger; den he can talk big, and is as full of life as a purser's cheese; but let him get in a breeze once, and he is taken frat aback before you can say mainsail haul. His heart drops down his belly like a deep-sea lead."

"But I say, Toggle, you don't think dey'll bring Seaward to the gangway, do you?"

"I'm apprehensious they will," responded the man of ebony. "He won't be the first good man that's been made to kiss the gunner's daughter. But avast there, Grummet; take a turn, and coil away your slack; for yonder's old Clinch and his gang of waisters come below to wash down the gun-deck, and it's not safe talking when there's a ship cousin within ear-shot."

Seven bells had been struck by the time the piece of duty which interrupted the conversation of these two idlers was completed; and as that is the hour when the hammocks are piped up on board a man-of-war, the deck soon became thronged. Among the

officers who first completed their toilet, and issued from below, was Lieutenant Parral, who immediately applied for admittance into the cabin, and remained there a considerable time closeted with his commander. When he left the conference, his eyes were observed to glisten with a sinister and satisfied expression, which those who knew the occurrences of his watch were at no loss to interpret.

It was a bright sabbath morning, and in the course of the forenoon an order was passed throughout the ship for the crew to prepare for muster—an order which set all on board busily to work, as it was known that it would speedily be followed by a call to prayers. The captain's clerk had recently been promoted to the office of chaplain by the commander, as an easy way of requiting him for certain secret services which it was whispered he had rendered. This supposition derived force from the fact that the individual had no intrinsic recommendations for the sacerdotal place. He was an ignorant and flippant creature, a sort of male Malaprop, and besides was by no means distinguished for perfect purity of morals in his private life and conversation. Nature had not bestowed on him a person which it was easy to display to great advantage; yet his prevailing taste was for dress, in the indulgence of which he had to contend with great native indolence of disposition, and long habits of uncleanliness, which sometimes had the effect to set his coxcombry off in a

very ludicrous light. The garments of this Beau Nasty, as his messmates termed him, were always incongruous and ill-assorted, and generally exhibited all the colours of the rainbow. It was not an unusual thing for him, too, to carry nearly his whole wardrobe on his back at the same time; and this was particularly the case with respect to his linen, which his indolence prevented him from changing, but which accumulated upon him in successive coverings, till, in the passage of the frigate from one port to another, his body, in itself lean and scraggy, would gradually acquire the appearance of considerable portliness and rotundity.

On the morning in question, this individual, with the natural procrastination of lazy men, had put off preparing himself for the duty he was to perform, until the summons of "All hands to prayers, hoy!" was expected every moment to resound through the ship; and his efforts at last to atone by haste for his delay were seriously interrupted by his fellow officers, who were accustomed to divert themselves by making the chaplain their butt. A Hogarth or Cruikshank might have found a good subject for his pencil in the perplexed countenance of this newly installed sea-divine, as he sat in the midst of the ward-room, half dressed, half shaved, and surrounded by his scattered integuments, from which his mischievous messmates every now and then slily abstracted some necessary article, and substituted some

other in its place. These practical jokes on the clerical functionary at length exhausted his patience.

"Damnation, purser," cried he, "give me my stockings! I've got to go on deck and preach in five minutes; and I'll hold the first one that reirritates this nonsense personally responsible." As the parson was a man to keep his word in such matters, and was known to be a good shot, this declaration had the desired effect; his companions did not "reirritate" their tricks; and the summons to worship at length found him, externally at least, prepared to officiate.

To one who has never seen religious worship on board of a man-of-war, at sea, the spectacle could not to have an imposing effect. The sailors, dressed fail in their spotless canvass garments, thronging the quarterdeck, and listening with the most serious attention; the marines, drawn up in military order, their belts as white as mountain snow, and their weapons and metal ornaments polished to the last degree of brightness; the officers, arranged about the capstan according to their rank; the chaplain in the midst, using that engine as his pulpit, and reading the solemn and simple service of the Episcopal church; above his head the broad and snowy wings which are wafting the stately vessel on her way; and around, as far as eye can see, and almost as imagination can extend, the measureless, fathomless, unchanging ocean—the image of eternity—these,

together, constitute a spectacle of the most impressive description.

On the day in question, the wind was fresh but steady, and the sun shone pleasantly down from a sky, the tender blue of which was here and there interrupted by a bank of fleecy and silvery clouds sailing smoothly on the bosom of the air. In all the horizon round not a single speck could be discerned that might denote the neighbourhood of any other thing of life, and thus disturb the solitary grandeur of the scene. The vessel was ploughing her way alone through the pathless waters of the great deep, and the congregation assembled on her deck to worship God had around them an evidence of his power and majesty, which was calculated to give the most devotional tone to their thoughts.

But that the scene did not thus affect all minds was evinced by an incident which occurred in the midst of the religious rite. A cloud had risen unnoticed from the horizon, and while the chaplain was in the act of pronouncing the solemn words, "O, ye seas and floods, bless ye the Lord, praise and magnify him for ever!" a sudden squall broke upon the vessel, which threw down a whole file of marines, and sent the chaplain flying and sprawling like a Madagascar bat to the lee scuppers. Confusion and bustle now took the place of reverent worship. The men flew to their several stations, and the voice of the commander was heard above the wind, shout-

ing out his rapid orders, mixed with discordant oaths.

"Jump to the clew-lines, men! How you move! how you move! Let go the halliards! clew up and clew down—haul, you damned scoundrel! haul! Keep her away, quartermaster!"

These and similar commands, boisterously vociferated, succeeded the words of prayer and praise, in strange and startling contrast. The violence of the squall, however, lasted but a few minutes, when the wind subsided again into a steady breeze. The sails were reset, the vessel brought to her course, and the crew once more mustered aft to listen to the rest of that service, of the effect of which on their commander's mind they had just had such abundant evidence.

On the conclusion of the religious exercises, all hands were called to witness punishment. This call gathered the crew in a dense mass in the weather-gangway, forward of the mainmast; the marines were drawn up in file in the gangway; and the officers grouped on the forward part of the quarter-deck, leaving a small semi-circular space between themselves and the crew, in which the culprits were to receive their sentence. The master-at-arms soon appeared on deck, with the two prisoners from the brig—the young man with whom the reader has already been made acquainted, and the older sailor confined for drunkenness. The chaplain was now

called upon to read the rules for the government of the navy. On the conclusion of this ceremony, the old seaman was severely reprimanded by the commander, and then dismissed to his fellows without further punishment. The young prisoner was next arraigned: the charge against him, of having slept on his post and uttered insolent and mutinous threats, was stated, and he was ordered to strip, while the boatswain's-mates were directed to seize him to the gangway. He was pale, and seemed moved with strong emotion, but betrayed no unmanly weakness. He begged his commander not to proceed against him without giving him a hearing, but to suffer him to explain the circumstances which led to his being imprisoned. He referred him to all the various officers of the ship for evidence of the general tenor of his conduct, and to Mr. Marling and other officers of the watch when his offence was said to have been committed, to prove that his language had been such as the occasion fully justified.

"Strip off your jacket and frock, this instant, sir!" cried the captain, interrupting the unhappy youth—"seize him up, botaswain's-mate! A pretty scoundrel, upon my honour, to add to his offence by intimating that the second lieutenant has made a false report. Seize him taught to that grating, and now lay on, and give it to him well, or you shall have a taste of it yourselves."

It is unnecessary to say that the orders of the

naval autocrat were promptly and strictly obeyed. We must take leave to pass hastily over this part of our story; for it is of a nature that no mind can pause upon with pleasure. The white and tender body of the poor boy was laid bare to the lash; his wrists were strongly tied to the gangway, and his ankles to the grating on which he stood. The cats, an instrument of torture the use of which is a disgrace to civilization, were applied to his back with a force that made each stripe leave its mark in blood; and when twelve of these had been given—(the full extent of punishment allowed by the rules of the navy)—an additional "half dozen" were ordered, as if in mockery of the very laws which had just been read, as furnishing the commander's warrant for inflicting corporal punishment at all!

The young man, after undergoing this piece of revolting barbarity, was released from the cords which bound him, and with a threatening reprimand dismissed to join his companions. Mr. Parral stood foremost in the group of officers, and had marked the whole occurrence with savage satisfaction. It had not extorted from poor Seaward a single shriek or groan to greet the listening ears of his persecutor. With a noble power of endurance, he had sustained the heavy and degrading infliction, and no outward sign, save the blood which followed the stripes, and the involuntary quivering of his lacerated flesh, betrayed the corporal or mental agony he ex-

perienced. When released, his cheek was deadly pale, and his lip bloodless; and while listening or seeming to listen, to his commander's reprimand, his eye rested with a stony and almost vacant gaze on the face of Mr. Parral. There was something in that gaze, however, which the latter could not brook, and his eye quailed before that of the young man, whom he had so cruelly and so causelessly injured. But this scene was only of a few moments' continuance; the prisoner was then dismissed; and the men, being piped down, dispersed to various parts of the ship.

What became of Maurice Seaward during the rest of the day no one knew; or at any rate no one mentioned his place of retreat. Towards evening, he was seen stealing from the cable-tier; and when his watch commenced, he was at his post on the upper-deck. The wind had freshened, and continued to increase. When the watch began, the light of day yet glimmered in the west, and a large pile of dusky clouds for a long time hung over the place where the sun had disappeared. These gradually rose and spread themselves over the heaven, and rolled along with torn and ragged edges, occasionally mingling together, and then separating, and indicating by their whole appearance and motions that the wind would soon increase to a gale. To be ready for this, the light and lofty sails were gradually taken in and stowed; the topgallant-yards

were sent down, the topgallant-masts struck, and other usual preparations made. Maurice Seaward performed his share in these several pieces of duty with as much alacrity and cheerfulness, seemingly, as he had ever displayed. This was a subject of remark among his shipmates, and some even thought he appeared more attentive, more ready, and gayer than on any previous occasion; and they were glad that his punishment, which they had been afraid would break his spirit, had passed off without leaving a deeper impression on his mind. There were others, however, who watched the youth with different feelings, who had a different way of accounting for his activity, and who fancied they saw in his countenance traces of thoughts which are not entertained by those who can lightly forget such injuries as he had endured.

The moon, which was near its full, occasionally shone down upon the ocean with great brightness, and would then, for several minutes, be totally obscured beneath the racks of heavy clouds which were drifting across the sky. It was during one of these periods of darkness, that the gale—which for some time before had been unsteady and fitful, now coming out with violence in puffs, and then dying away in a great measure—burst suddenly upon the vessel with unbounded fury. So violent was the shock, that she was thrown on her side by its force, heeling so low that her main yard-arm al-

most touched the water, and a following sea broke over her and nearly completed her prostration, before it was possible to get her off before the wind. This startling and fearful concussion, more effectually than any boatswain's call, brought every soul on deck. The first lieutenant took the trumpet; the others hastened to their several stations; and for some moments loud orders and replies sounded above the roar of the tempest. In a short time, however, the ship was reduced to short sail for scudding, and the confusion and tumult on her deck were stilled. The light had increased, too, for the moon was now wading along the edge of a cloud, under the denser folds of which it had for some time before been completely hid.

At this instant of comparative stillness and quiet, an unusual noise arose in the fore part of the vessel. It was a momentary sound, as of the shuffling of feet and struggling, and seemed to come from the top-gallant forecastle. It ceased, and was followed by a plash in the water. Then deep silence succeeded —and in an instant after this was broken by the appalling cry of "a man overboard!—a man overboard." The crew thronged to the side, and those who sprang first on the hammock-cloths, or peered through the port-holes, thought they saw a dusky looking object drift rapidly by. All rushed to the taffrel. The moon now emerged wholly from beneath the cloud, and its broad light falling on the

billowy and tossing sea, rested full on the figures of Lieutenant Parral and Maurice Seaward; who, clasped together in a deadly embrace, were floating with great rapidity to leeward. The face of Parral was already black from the strangling grasp of Seaward round his throat, and his eyes stared forth with unnatural protrusion. Once, the two rose together more than half way out of the water, as they were thrown up on the crest of a boiling wave—the arms of Parral were spread wildly out, like those of one in a death-struggle, and some fancied that a faint shriek reached their ears. The figures then descended in the hollow of the sea, and rose no more! The ship was brought to the wind, and buoys and spare spars were thrown over. An attempt, too, was made to lower a boat; but she was swamped alongside, and the two sailors who descended in her narrowly escaped drowning. Had she been able to live in the heavy sea, however, the intended search would have been fruitless. The objects of it were beyond the reach of human succour or human vengeance. Those who had witnessed this dreadful catastrophe remained for a long time straining their eyes with an intense gaze on the spot where the victims disappeared, in the hope of again descrying some trace of them; but they were never seen again.

THE END.

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